

E 1019

“ G O D——? ”

“GOD—?”

By
SHAW DESMOND



LONDON
ARTHUR BARKER, LTD.
21 GARRICK STREET, COVENT GARDEN

FIRST PUBLISHED . . . 1936

*Made and Printed in Great Britain
by Jarrold and Sons, Ltd., Norwich*

**TO
THOSE WHO LOVE
AND SUFFER**

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
HOW THIS LITTLE BOOK WAS WRITTEN . . .	ix
I. THE GOD THAT MEN WANT	I
II. A WORLD IN FLUX	4
III. GOD AND OURSELVES	9
IV. SIN AND SUFFERING	19
V. SHIP OF STARS	27
VI. BIRTH AND DEATH AND GOD	31
VII. FREE-WILL	36
VIII. GOD AND SINNER	39
IX. GOD AND THE SEXES	50
X. GOD AND ROMANCE	62
XI. GOD AND THE ARTIST	65
XII. "THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES"	74
XIII. GOD AND THE CHURCHES	80
XIV. THE GOD OF DOGMA	85
XV. THE ARTIST AND DOGMA	96
XVI. THE "LIBERAL" GOD	102
XVII. "FAITH" AND "PRAYER"	109
XVIII. THE METAMORPHOSIS OF JESUS	114
XIX. THE NEW "MOVEMENTS"	121
XX. GOD AND POLITICS	125
XXI. GOD AND NATIONALITY	134
XXII. THE GOD OF ECONOMICS	143
XXIII. SCIENCE AND RELIGION	151
XXIV. "THE WORLD THAT IS COMING" (POLITICS AND ECONOMICS)	160
XXV. "THE WORLD THAT IS COMING" (CONTINUED) (SEX AND MARRIAGE)	169
XXVI. "THE WORLD THAT IS COMING" (CONTINUED) (SCIENCE AND RELIGION)	172
EPILOGUE	179

HOW THIS LITTLE BOOK WAS WRITTEN

FROM my earliest years I was passionated by "The Idea of God".

I wanted to know all about Him. How He looked. What He did. The things He really thought.

I was, in the confused way of the child, intensely dissatisfied and unconvinced by the explanations and descriptions of my parents and of the churches. For the time I accepted what I was told, but in the secret places of my heart, for it is in the heart and not in the brain that the things that matter, happen, I do not think there was a moment when I did not believe that nearly all I heard was nonsense, or at best conjecture, and that none of these people really "knew". On the whole, I still think that conclusion was accurate. Nobody, certainly no church, really knows anything about God beyond the fundamental primitive things which are open to any child. I sometimes think the child, in one way, knows the most.

Something of the struggles and miseries of that period I have set out in my novel of the Idea of God, called *Gods*—a book which has evoked subtle if limited attention throughout the English-speaking world, and in my novel *Passion* in the chapter under that heading.

The stages through which I passed in my search for a God were more or less defined. There was the "Boody Man" stage of *Passion*, of a God who was Jehovah, the tyrant and judge—a purely male God. Then the stage impersonal, when God became a principle—possibly loving and caring, but obviously also hating—for did not all things, whether of love or hate, or health or sickness proceed from the Father of all? In Him, the male principle was leavened with something of the woman.

Finally, after searching most of the chief religions of the East and West, many of the philosophies, and some of the “isms”, from those of rationalism and agnosticism to that of atheism, I found my *God*. True, I did not meet Him face to face, but saw Him “as in a glass darkly”—but I *saw* Him. What really mattered was that I felt Him.

I found Him to be as much human as divine, and that so far from being remote, He stood near me sleeping and waking, lying down and standing up. That He was, indeed, infinitely concerned for me and for all human beings, but that for each human being, according to his or her stage of evolution, spiritual and intellectual, He took different forms and attributes. I found Him to be a “Father-Mother” God, for He was as much mother as father.

Above all, I found that this “human” God, as I call Him, was as different from the remote super-human God presented by some of the churches as could be imagined, and, with it, that the path to God and to His understanding can only be trodden by the individual himself or herself, and that there are as many paths to God as there are human beings. My path, which was that of the creative artist touched by philosophy, could not be the same as that of the scientist, the politician or the business man, whose paths were, however, no less worthy than my own. But these countless individual paths all had one thing in common—they were *love*-paths, and through love alone could Man and Woman find their way to the God of Love.

(It was only later that I realised, to my great comfort, that, directly or indirectly, all this had been said by Jesus in the New Testament record.)

There was no other way. Neither the way of fear, nor ceremony, nor even that of worship except when divorced from fear, could be the way to God, who had

to be approached not in "fear and trembling", but as a Greater Comrade of whom we were part, in frankness and *criticism* and, above all, in the love that binds the whole and makes the whole possible. With this, it seemed to me that I had begun to feel that His universes rested upon *free-will*—limited as to the moment but ultimately and in its essence absolute.

With all this I discovered one other thing. That this earth was but one of countless schools in which we learnt the meaning of love and of the God who works through love—and with it, the meaning of sin and suffering and hate, which I was beginning, dimly, to recognise as masks for the divine love lying behind. That, perhaps, love and hate, health and suffering, were two facets of the same thing.

I learned that *faith*, instead of being the same for all and leading for all to one dogmatic goal, varied with the individual soul in method, interpretation, and "achievement", and that it was but the key placed in the door of life for us to turn and to enter into the Eternal Now and into the comradeship and friendship of our Father-Mother God, who was many-folded as the stars of heaven.

Ultimately, I made what to me was the supreme discovery—that neither hell nor heaven, death nor time existed, that we carried within us our own hells and heavens now and always, and that death was but "the little friendly portal" to new life.

And that all this could be tested by the individual as easily as any problem of science—for there came to me the final revelation that prayer made with faith even as a grain of mustard seed in one way or another was *always* answered.

God was "human" as well as divine. He was my Friend and not my Judge. *God was love.*

In these pages I am not concerned so much with “proof” as with the fact of personal realisation, in a domain in which “proof” can only be found by each one not so much in brain as in his or her own heart. The concern of religion is not that of Science, which is “demonstration”, whereas that of religion is “experience” and realisation, in other words, *feeling*—something that has yet to be realised by the world at large. In the domain of Religion, what is “proof” to one man is not proof to another—and “truth” is found to vary with the evolution and development of the individual, who has yet to find out that there is a deeper court of appeal than Reason. Religion, like the “faith” which is its fount, is a “soul” not a “brain”-experience, the brain only being for the demonstration of a truth already *felt* in the heart.

Believing that this experience of a single human soul and the conclusions to which it led might have some interest for other human souls, I have ventured, humbly, to set down simply as well as I may and with a full sense of its shortcomings, the results of this solitary experience—and that as much perhaps for myself as for those others.

And if it seem at times that these conclusions have been recorded with a certain assurance, I trust it will be recognised that it is an assurance born of conviction and experience rather than dogmatism, and of sincerity rather than a desire to proselytise, than which nothing could be more distasteful to one who believes with all his heart and brain that not only are there as many paths to God as there are human beings but that no man can choose another’s path.

Yet, though he may not choose for him, he can perhaps help him along the road which, in a broader sense, we men and women all tread together out of time into eternity.

I

THE GOD THAT MEN WANT

We call! . . .

From out the stilly Void no answer comes.

God.

Who is God? What is God? *Is there a God?*

In those remoter places of our being where the conscious and the unconscious overlap, and where we *know* all the deeper more intimate things, we feel that this thing concerns us more than anything else from birth to death—if only because it concerns both birth and death. Far more than the winning of our daily bread, for man is always discovering that he “does not live by bread alone”.

Every man and woman on this tiny planet spinning in space wishes to have an answer to man’s eternal question: “God, where art thou?”

We are all of us set in a great loneliness. *We want a Friend.* Some Friend who alone can understand us and help us in our human misery and be happy with us in our human joys.

We want a Friend who is not subject to human whims and frailties, one whom we can at all times trust. We want a God not only divine but “human”.

What is the God that we human beings want?

We want a God who will be one with us in the Adventure of life with a feeling for the beauty and enjoyment of that life; who will understand not only our lovings but our hatings, our pleasures as our pains. We want a God who will not only tell us when and

why we are wrong but one who will “listen to reason”, who will even be ready to be “asked questions”, who will ask nothing of us that we cannot perform or place burdens on our shoulders beyond our endurance.

We do not want a Sunday God. We want a God of every day. We want Him sleeping and waking, sitting down and standing up—one who will always be by our side and speak to us directly with His own voice and not only through that of others, living or dead.

We want, indeed, a Friend and Comrade.

.

What is it that each woman and man wishes to *know* about God?

First of all, proof that He exists.

Next, that He cares for us as individuals, as well as for this earth, our home, which He and we together form.

That He is a God of “reason” as well as of blind “faith”.

That He can speak to us and we to Him.

The reason for *sin* and *suffering*.

That life has purpose and evolution, and that it is neither “chance” nor “luck”.

And, most vital of all, for without it nothing else matters—that we *survive Death*.

.

Yet “what man, by searching, can find out God?”

It seems to me that it is not by searching, not by the intellect, that we can find out God, but by feeling, by the *imagination*. “The wind bloweth where it listeth”—that is, the wind of the spirit of God. Like the rain, it falls both upon the just and the unjust, but it is only where preparation has been made for it by the *heart* and the imagination that it can find entrance.

I believe these things, not as theory, but by realisation and experience. I believe what all that long line of Great Teachers of man have taught from the beginning of time—that, whatever the form or name we care to give Him, God is a reality. That He is always near, waiting to help us. That He really is infinitely concerned with each one of us and loves us. And, finally, that all these statements can be *proved* by any one of us.

I, who am a member of no church, believe in no dogma, and yet feel and know all these things that I have written, have only one claim to write them—that I think I can say, humbly, I have proved them in my own person to be true.

How I have done this will, I hope, later become apparent.

II

A WORLD IN FLUX

The padding years steal by on velvet feet—
A feline flood that rushes to a sea
Where no sail shows and glims a fainter star
Over the midnight of a borning world.

WE are to-day, nearly midway through the twentieth century, witnessing certain tendencies and phenomena which, one imagines, may be forerunners of the birth of a New Order, or, to use a phrase we are constantly meeting in print and on the platform, of a "New World".

Whether one does or does not care for so sweeping a phrase, it will I think be generally admitted that the men and women of our day feel that we are living in an age without parallel, literally, of phenomenal transition, economically, socially, and morally, and that in the domain of religion, in particular, we are seeing what one may call a World in Flux.

This little book is not the place to detail at length the metamorphosis of our daily lives which first showed itself at the end of the Great War, which itself acted as Red Plough to break up old ground for the setting of new seed—particularly the seed of new ideas of religion. Yet it is essential to indicate briefly some of these swift changes in order that we may realise the Central Idea behind them for which they are clearing the way, and which I at least believe, informs them—that is, the new Idea of God, to which I shall later refer.

In the world of economics, we are watching the swift transition of the competitive system, as indicated by vast national schemes and "Plans" upon collectivist lines, the passing of Credit in its older form, and, the outstanding

fact of the last five years, the decline of purchasing power and the enormous increase of productive power with the growing automatism of the Machine. This last leading in its turn to the disturbing increase of unemployment and the crashing of whole economic systems of currency hitherto regarded as immutable.

Without straining, I believe that it may be conceded that through the collapse of our economic systems during this period, despite occasional "booms", with commercial crises increasing in scope and decreasing in period, the minds of men are being gradually turned from a materialist to a more spiritual concept of life. Indeed, I do not think it is too much to say that the break up of the Money Gods has made way in the minds of men for an idea of spiritual values which itself is leading to the exchange of what one may call Old Gods for New.

In the worlds of politics, men and women have in a short lifetime of 40 years seen since the war such revolutions of ideas and systems as nobody could have contemplated before 1918, with each country shutting itself up into an armed fortress and the international exchange of commodities steadily ceasing. They have been watching the passing not only of kings but of parliaments and the Coming of the Dictators—all of them out of the same mould whether Bolshevik or Fascist. They have seen arise in the East the terrific Bolshevik Experiment in which the idea of the State has replaced the idea of God, and the very existence of God and spirit has for the first time in our day been challenged by a national government, and, at least as regards the supremacy of the "State" over the "Church", have seen something of the same kind in countries so separated temperamentally as Italy and Germany. Event staggers on the heels of event until no economist and no politician dare prophesy what is to be the end,

or even grasp the meaning of the events themselves as they tumble about them.

In the world of Science, we have been watching during the last twenty years a strange “sea-change”.

We have been seeing the old materialist schools gradually invaded by what one may term “spiritual” schools, with a completely new concept of matter and indeed of life as shown in such books as Sir James Jeans’s *Mysterious Universe* or J. W. Dunne’s *An Experiment with Time*, which has been rightly described by even such a materialist Die-Hard as Mr. H. G. Wells, who is a mystic without knowing it, as “a fantastically interesting book”, which had “stirred his imagination vividly”, and by another authority as “one of the most important books of this age”. We are seeing the old battle of Science *v.* Religion gradually passing as it is realised that Religion and Science are but two aspects of the same thing. We are finding the Huxleys and the Ray Lankesters, the Haeckels and Tyndalls of the past and even the Keiths of our day gradually being replaced in the world of science by anti-materialists of the type of the Russel Wallaces and Crookes’s of an older generation and of men like Zollner and Larkin, Lodge and Barrett, Eddington and Jeans of the later periods. And now, some of these leaders of science even avow themselves believers in the existence of a “God”, in one form or other, and of a divine purpose and intelligence behind life.

Indeed, in that world of science, we have recently read in Sir James Jeans’s *Mysterious Universe* that Science has now been compelled to admit this idea of some kind of God behind life.

After quoting Berkeley’s assumption that some sort of Eternal Life-Force or “God” does exist behind life and death, we find Sir James Jeans significantly commenting:

"Modern science seems to me to lead, by a very different road, to a not altogether dissimilar conclusion."

When we find the French psychologist, Professor Henri Pierioni, addressing in Chicago the American Association for the advancement of Science, telling his astonished hearers that all life is a dream and that "what we see, hear, touch, smell, taste and feel, think or know, are merely shadows . . . they are merely symbols of objects, not the objects themselves", we also find ourselves facing my contention that the World of Science, like that of Religion, is in flux and that we are moving rapidly towards the official recognition of "God" in Science. As for the mechanistic concept of phenomena of a Professor Ernst Haeckel which until recently held the field, it is not only flatly contradicted by men like Jeans but, if we are to follow the trends of modern science, is now being abandoned for ever.

Indeed, in its way perhaps the queerest *bouleversement* of all, we have practically seen matter *qua* "matter" abolished by the modern mathematician who, like his fellow scientists, is constantly finding himself compelled to invent new terminologies to keep pace with the revolutionary discoveries in mathematics which are fast driving the mathematician as his fellows in other branches of science into "the world invisible", where, like disembodied and often disgruntled spirits, they flounder!

As regards Sex and Morals, using the latter word in its narrow and artificial sense of the relationship of the sexes, it needs only to be stated to be admitted that the floodgates of the past have been swept away and that our world is in so rapid a state of change—not always beautiful, for transition stages are often ugly—that our boys and girls have scrapped almost everything their parents and grandparents held as sacred. Now, having "looped the loop", we are watching some

of these amateur voluptuaries, tiring of licence and finding it to be the hardest of all taskmasters, reaching out, not to the older puritanical concepts of their parents but to newer and finer concepts of sex-freedom without licence. The thing which I believe accounts for that idealist but still small minority of boys and girls we occasionally meet in daily life who are deeply concerned with spiritual and romantic things in an intelligent as well as emotional way. We see also the gradual return of the Romance which had been discarded by those who have found sensuality to be the death of that feeling for the Adventure of Life, without which we men and women cannot exist. Indeed, we are told by newspaper editors as by schoolmasters and others who are at least supposed to have their fingers on the pulse of youth, that never has there been such an interest, though unorthodox interest, in religion as in our day.

Marriage and Divorce is in our day something quite other than a generation or two ago. Here the puritan alarmist has believed the very pillars of society threatened by the easy-come easy-go concept of the marriage tie, instead of seeing in all this one of those ugly transition stages which is making way for the greater freedom accompanied by a chastity and decency and with them a comradeship of the sexes which our ancestors never knew, and the beginning of which we are already seeing amongst men and women of sensitive intelligence.

All of which leads naturally to the domain in which the deepest revolutions of all are taking place, the effects of which it will not be possible to interpret for at least another generation—that is, Religion and our concept of God.

But this consideration of Religion will need a chapter to itself.

III

GOD AND OURSELVES

Man wants a human God of spirit fleshed,
Holding the secrets of man's death and birth,
His brow within the fleecy cloud enmeshed,
His feet deep-rooted in the homely earth.

It is in the world of Religion—that is to say in the world which includes all others—that a “world-revolution”, in comparison with which that projected by Bolshevik Russia becomes a street fight, has rushed upon us unawares. Within the hand-span of a generation, there have been more changes in the religious world than in the previous two thousand years. Nor am I dealing with “opinions” but with facts universally admitted, not only by the sociologist but even by the churches themselves.

Put briefly, we have seen such a decline of “authority” in the religious worlds of the West, and even, as in the case of Turkey and Russia and Japan and China in the East, as no man had ever imagined. With this has gone the loosening of dogma, and the gradual emptying of the temples of Christian Orthodoxy. To the consideration of which we shall return later. The fact that orthodoxy and dogma generally have declined, does not mean, I believe, that we are seeing a decline in “religion” or the religious sense, but rather a more universal accretion of that sense and of the interest in religion, and with it what I believe to be a new concept of God.

If I were asked to put into a phrase these new tendencies and the religious phenomena we are now witnessing, at any rate, throughout the Western

world, I would say that, as it would seem for the first time in the history of the planet *we are bringing God into life.*

We are, to-day, nearly midway through the twentieth century, witnessing a quite extraordinary Event.

We are, I think, seeing the birth of a New World with a New Idea of God—something which has been preparing through the ages by Those who stand and wait behind our earthly life. We are living in a time when our old men are seeing visions and our young men are dreaming dreams of a kind never before seen or dreamt—for they are no longer of things remote from life but part of life.

We have all got into a muddle about God.

Hitherto, and as we shall later see, Man had regarded God through the ages as being more or less segregated from life, He being clad in such majesty and “awe-fulness” that it was impossible to regard Him as a *friend*, without which it is impossible to bring Him into our daily lives. He was Judge or Lawgiver under the Mosaic concept. Jesus made the attempt to replace that concept by that of God as Friend and as not only a Heavenly but Earthly Father—only to see the apparent end of his attempt on Calvary. The Mediæval Church in the Dark Ages continued the Jehovah-concept of Moses and used God for purposes of worship and protection—not for friendship, although in its instinctive and natural desire for a Friend, it placed what it called his “Mother” in that position.

I believe that, up to the age in which we are now living, we human beings, in our ignorance and blindness, have never taken Him as our Friend—though almost as anything else. I believe that God has

always been waiting there outside our door, waiting to come in and to show Himself to us. Not as our "Judge" or even as our "Maker"—the position to which hitherto we had relegated Him, but as our friend and comrade.

Instead of taking Him to our hearts as we would have done a human friend knocking outside our door, we have either kept the door locked or, when we have timorously opened it, "kept it on the chain" between the Lover of Men and ourselves. We have insisted upon our Friend remaining in his heaven and ourselves upon our earth.

As I have said, we have segregated God from our daily life. At last, I contend, we are beginning to bring Him into that life.

I think that this is shown amongst other things by the various "movements" springing up in our day in the religious world, which have for their centre this recognition of God as a friend—immanent. And all this quite apart from the limitations or otherwise of such movements.

We have seen the Oxford Movement, for example, run like wildfire across the world, first taking root in America and Europe, conquering a materialist Denmark and the rest of Scandinavia, and then running overseas to Africa, etc. In this movement, it is again and again emphasised that "God is our friend"—not merely our Judge.

We are seeing, in a word, in our day what is a world-effort towards direct approach to God. It is an approach by the "heart" rather than by the "head"—that is to say by "feeling" rather than "brain and dogma", and by the individual rather than by either Church or priest as intermediaries . . . which, indeed, seems to have been Jesus's own approach.

I think it will be found by our descendants to have been the emergence of the idea of a “human” rather than a “super-natural” God, and with it the birth of the most revolutionary idea in Man’s evolution, one which will act as midwife of the New World that is being delivered under our eyes. Like a woman with child, our little earth has reached her time and is now about to bring forth this conception of God as our Friend and Greater Comrade.

In all this, I am not concerned so much with them as “movements”, as “tendencies” and phenomena of this extraordinary age of transition in which we live. All such movements have their weak and strong points like all things human, but—the thing which concerns us here—they are all characterised by the approach direct, and by this newer concept of God as Friend and as part of our lives of everyday.

Thus, in the United States we have seen the sudden rise of a movement which has now become international and which within a decade or two grew from a single woman to millions. I refer to Christian Science, which has possibly already caused more bitter controversy and separated more households than any other “religion” of our day save one, and the limitations and difficulties of which are, I think, not hard to see.

Here, again, the secret of the success of this movement has been its appeal to this concept of God as Friend and as an immediate part of our lives—in this case as Healer. To the “Scientist”, God is always standing at her or his elbow to console, to direct, and to heal. In this idea of God there is no “dogma” unless the by Science nearly universally admitted effect of Mind upon Body be taken as such.

And, to me at least, an even more significant phenomenon than that of the rise of Christian Science is to

be found in the lightning advance of our day of the thing which is behind it—psycho-therapeutics or, to use the popular term, of “faith-healing”, across the White Worlds on either side of the Atlantic—a rush of public opinion and adherence which has even impelled the orthodox medical profession more and more in its “psycho-analytical” and other trends to concentrate upon this “healing by mind”.

When the more conservative fastnesses of science, such as medicine, begin to find their locks forced by what is actually, in its essence, a new God-concept, we may rest assured that the world is in the throes of a revolution in ideas, not only of science but of religion.

But it is in what is generically known as “Spiritualism”, an “ism” which embraces men and women of the most widely differing views of life and of God, from members of the State churches to those who belong to no church, that I think we find one of the most striking and even universal evidences of this new direct and immanent concept of God.

In fact one of the main criticisms of these bodies is that the older organised forms of belief had got away from the idea of God as a friend, which they insist was the very inspiration of the teaching of Jesus and of the Primitive Church.

It is their contention that we can “speak with God” through His angels or “spirits” that is to-day attracting what must now be millions of people of every colour and drawn from practically every country in the world.

But it is their general and persistent contention and belief that we should take our troubles to Him by the direct method and that He can be demonstrated as apart from “faith” alone, however important that faith may be, which marks out these new bodies and individuals, many of whom neither call themselves

“spiritualists” nor belong to any organised spiritualist body.

They insist that He sends His good angels to watch over each one of us, and that He, through them as His instruments, is behind our uprising or down-lying. They emphasise in particular His intimate love for us and our personal capacity to test it, and are increasingly beginning to declare that what we call “evil” is but another facet of what we call “good”.

But apart from these various “movements” and “isms”, I think the proof that God is no longer a remote “idea” but is coming into our daily lives and thoughts is to be shown by the growing and enormous correspondence and articles which reach our daily newspapers upon subjects connected with the “Idea of God” and religion, most of them tending to, or having as their essential basis, this newer idea of a God unhedged from us by dogma or creed and regarded as a Friend.

We have reached the point when the daily newspaper regards “God” as “news”—and when, as we are seeing, certain big newspapers are running “religion” not as a temporary “stunt” as in the past but as a regular feature. This last is significant.

Further, never has there been such an output of religious books which seek to bring God into the daily life and to prove Him to be a Friend and Comrade. And this is as true of America as of Europe. It will I think be found that the number of religious books issued, published and dealing exclusively with dogma and “authority” is decreasing in an inverse ratio to the increase in books dealing with God from what I have termed the “human” standpoint.

This is an entirely new Idea of God.

Through all the millions of years that Man and Woman have existed on this earth until our day, we had thought of God just as a "god". An Almighty Imperson so overwhelming, and, except at certain inspired moments, so remote, that it was impossible for us to regard him as a "friend"—only as a Judge. This "Strange God", as He was called by the patriarchs.

It is true there was a time when, in one way at least, Man felt his God close to him—that was when the world was young and "man walked with God". But even there it was the "creature" communing with the "Creator" rather than with the Friend. The patriarchs "feared" God rather than "loved" Him. They "worshipped" rather than communed with Him, "begged" rather than "prayed" to Him, in that democracy of the spirit which can bridge all gulfs—even that between God and Man!

Always the love of Man for his God in the past was a love blended with fear. Even the most loving Man that ever lived was unable to take that fear out of the human heart.

When man thought of God as a Super-Being, always near to judge and to punish, or to reward, just like a human tyrant, it was impossible for him to think of God as loving him. When he spoke of Him as a "loving God", it was more in placation than conviction. God was then for him a purely masculine God—"just" but a tyrant. He was Jehovah the Judge and a "jealous" God. A "strange" God, indeed!

Only once in that long history of Man's estrangement from his Friend was something of this "strangeness" broken down. That was when the "Son of Man", Jesus, came to tell us, for us so soon to forget, that "Our Father", as He called Him, was close to us.

That He was always there to help and to understand—and, above all, to *love*.

Jesus Himself was the Great Lover, of a love so simple and direct that even those who hated Him could not help loving Him underneath. For love and hate in their earlier stages have more in common than we think—and how quickly can not one turn to the other!

Now, for the first time in the story of Man on this planet, as I think the new “movements” and “isms” demonstrate, God has at one and the same time taken on a much greater and a much more intimate quality.

Ceasing gradually to be a remote Person and Judge, and becoming part of our everyday lives, we are at last becoming conscious of His nearness and His friendliness.

And to-day, also for the first time, there is creeping into Man’s idea of God a certain tender woman-quality which finds itself in that expression so often used in the spiritualistic and the more mystical movements of our day—“our Father-Mother God”. For the tremendous Impersonality of Love, which we call “God”, stands outside all sex. He is not only our Father but our Mother, the almighty arms always about us, and one of the tragedies of religion has been the exclusive association of God with the male quality.

It is at last breaking in upon our delighted senses that “God” is neither a figment of the imagination nor the remote judge, but that He is, in a very “human” as well as divine sense, a living understanding being, whom we cannot only “love” but of whom we can even “be fond” as we have been of Jesus—the most intimate term for deep feeling which our poor humanity can use. That He does not work arbitrarily or even in the

rigid exactitude which is a parody of that "justice" whose name it bears, but is terribly lovingly concerned for each moment of our lives.

And all this whether we regard Him as a Being of such tremendous all-embracing love as to be nearly inexpressible in terms of Person, or whether we feel Him as a Person. I believe that if we think of Him as did Jesus—the Son who of all His children was nearest to Him—as a loving Father, we shall, as finite beings, get closest to the true concept and to the one He would have us feel. For God really is love.

I also, as many others who have had such personal experience, believe that, from the time we come out of our mother's womb until we pass back again at the end of life into that of eternity, that God sends His angels to watch over us. I believe that the term "our good angel" is no imaginative figment, but that it is literal fact.

My proof is that not only do we read of such life-guards through history, especially in that Bible for which I do not here claim greater authority than any other great book, but we also know of some who have seen and even spoken with their "guardian angels".

I myself speak as one of many who have had this personal experience—something I mean literally and not metaphorically.

Partly on this account, I believe that the sentence: "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee" to be accurate statement of fact. I can state definitely that I have experienced the results of such "charge" in the form of direct interference to save me from danger, not once but several times. Some have even felt, objectively, the almighty arms about them to save them from harm—not only that indirect intervention and protection by which we are all surrounded, but by the intervention unmistakable, *direct!*

This is as certain as that men and women have been saved from violence by the interference of human flesh and blood in their defence. To debate it would be ridiculous—for *there is no arguing with personal experience.*

If there be anything else we are learning in this new time, it is that God shows that love through the sweet reasonableness of *law*—natural law. That He does not work arbitrarily even when He performs what are miscalled “miracles”.

History shows unmistakably that Man and Woman’s progress forward and upward to the stars where lies their real home and to their God, has been in a series of leaps. These leaps are invariably ushered in by a Great Teacher, of whom the last was Jesus of Nazareth, who, in a very real, that is to say undogmatic sense, was not only the Son of God, as we are each one of us, but also the Son of Man.

There was and is about this lovely Comrade such sweetness of life and light, such human understanding, as wins us in spite of ourselves to His concept of love as the heart-beat of all.

In His own day, He was the first to challenge that fierce Jehovah-God from the ironbound conception of which we are only now freeing ourselves.

Again, I insist, we are, for the first time in history, thinking of God as a Friend. We are doing so because of something that happened two thousand years ago—something that appearing as a Child of Hope and dying as a Man of Sorrows, seemed to be the most colossal failure in history but now emerging to show itself as assured triumph—that is, the emergence of Jesus as a dear Friend and Comrade, who is once more teaching us, but upon a higher, deeper vibration, that God our Father is real and that God our Father is love.

IV

SIN AND SUFFERING

The man'kin stands upon the pedestal of earth
That lies between the edge of death and life again,
To gaze intent upon the masked and shrouded Face—
Finished the day's work and finished too the pain,
Sinned the last sin and ended now the task,
Trembling he stands, his Question now to ask. . . .
The last veil falls—

To show the Glory from behind the Mask.

I BELIEVE that the thing which, more than anything else, has so far come between us and God the Friend, is the problem of Sin and Suffering. I believe that the religionists of our day have, in this as so many things, shown themselves cowards in their tacit refusal to face this terrible issue of a God of love and mercy using two such scourges to drive Man and Woman along the road of evolution.

We should honour the man who refuses to be put off by the uneasy facilities of the professional theologian when he is faced with this issue. How much greater and finer is the man or woman who, instead of blinding himself or herself to this issue and to the contradictions involved and facilely saying: "It is all for the best—we must believe!" faces the fact and challenges his and her God. That God who is there to be asked questions, and, if necessary, to be challenged.

Even the earthly teacher who demands obedience without criticism is one from whom to flee as though he were the devil himself! All the Enlightened Ones invite criticism! In dogma lies death.

The origin of and, above all, the *reason* for Sin and Suffering, is, apart from survival, the one thing about

which everybody at one time or another is concerned. That is to say, concerned with First Causes, for so long regarded as undebatable and unknowable.

No religion and no World Teacher has, so far as I know, ever made any attempt to explain the Paradox of the employment of sin and suffering by a God of mercy and love. As for the priestly exponents of all religions, they have invariably either slurred or ignored what may be called “God’s unpleasant sides”, under such vague phrases as that “it was His will”, or that such things as pain and mental suffering were “sent as punishment for our sins”. But whence and why these sins, in their turn, came, our theologians have been discreetly and significantly silent.

In the only passion they so often seem to possess—that for compromise—they repeat, parrot-like, the phrase—“we must have faith!” a formula which has ceased to have any living meaning. They infer that faith will, more or less, lead all men and women to the same conclusions, whereas “faith”, and the conclusions to which it leads, *mean one thing for one man and something quite different for another.*

Further than that, the faith of a woman is not the same as the faith of a man. Neither words nor ideas mean the same things to her. She does not even “feel” in the same way. Men and women, however, like evil and good, health and disease, are two facets of the same thing—absolutely equal but eternally different—each the complement of the other.

The faith of each one of us, woman or man, is conditioned by the stage of evolution which each of us has reached. As our spiritual and even our mental stature grows, so does our faith and its meaning for us. The faith of the African savage, however fine, having regard to the point in evolution which he has reached, may

have for him a meaning which he may interpret in terms of idol-worship and black magic. The faith of a great mystic will bear him into heavens of which the savage cannot even dream and will be interpreted for him in terms that are at once universal and personal in the "white" magic of selflessness and love.

Yet all faith is of the same essence and has the same origin. It is the Voice of God speaking to Man. And God has many voices.

But it is a voice speaking to Man as he is able to bear the message. It comes in a series of *revelations*. "There are many things I would say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," said Jesus. The Gautama Buddha, plucking a solitary leaf from the banyan tree behind him and handing it to his *chelahs* or disciples said something like this: "The things I have told you are this leaf—those I have not are the leaves on the tree behind me."

He also warned them about indulging in speculations upon "First Causes", insisting, perhaps in the final issue mistakenly, that they were unknowable and that such speculations were mere mental gymnastics and the "Words—words—words" beloved of the professional theologian and dialectician, as indeed they nearly always are.

What did Jesus Himself say about this supreme problem of sin and pain?

I will here content myself with saying that I do not think that Jesus, who was open and clear as the sun in the sky, tried to sidestep such questions, which, indeed, in the age in which He lived, were, I am sure, rarely put to Him. I believe that His silence about First Causes and the reason and necessity for Sin and Suffering was due to His knowledge that Man's mental evolution had not yet reached the stage

where such explanation would be understood, even if He, the Master, could make such explanations. And, apart from all other considerations, what terminology would He employ that would be “understandable of the people”? We cannot even say whether He did not make any reference to First Causes, as not only have but a tiny fraction of His sayings been recorded but those that we have are, according to the first authorities, full of interpolations and with many evidences of tamperings with the original records.

To assert, as do so many “intellectuals”, who have divorced spirit from intellect, and the sentimental religious emotionalists with whom on this single point they have joined hands, that in recorded time there has been no mental or spiritual advance in Man, and that what could be understood to-day could also have been understood in the world of two thousand years ago, is surely a ludicrous travesty. The imagination of Man, even within the last half century, has taken wings to itself, and Man himself has, with the coming of the wireless, the cinema and the aeroplane been transformed from a local into an international and, above all, into a “cosmic” animal. The very Power Machine which by the myopic was supposed to hamper his heavenward path, has given him the conquest of matter, so freeing the Spirit for higher flight. He is even realising for the first time that *he is a spirit*, a transient only of this earth on his starward soaring. That is surely the greatest “revolution in evolution”.

It would have been as impossible for the Master two thousand years ago to have made His meaning clear as it would be for a modern mathematician to explain to the average man the problems of those higher mathematics of our day, the solution of which is fast leading to the abolition of matter *qua* matter!

But the deeper reason, I am assured, was that to have entered into such discussions, would have been to obscure in His day the clearness of His message—which was just a Love-Message and nothing else.

This issue of Sin and Suffering we shall not avoid in these pages. I believe that the time has come in the evolution of our world when we have to face First Causes even if, being finite, we cannot yet explain them, and when, as I feel deeply, Man and especially Woman for the first time will be able to understand something of the reason for the employment of sin and suffering as *experiences*. It may even be that, ultimately, generations now unborn will find bursting upon their dazzled imagining the realization as they gain perspective, that all these experiences, however seemingly terrible at the moment, are but facets of the Eternal Love and Truth which lies behind all life everywhere. That, in a word, Evil, in so far as it is “experience”, is but another manifestation of Good!

I do not say that I, or any son of man, can to-day give an “explanation” which can appeal to the point of development, spiritual and intellectual, that we humans have reached. But I do feel, by “faith” if you will, that for the first time in his story, Man is now being made ready to understand that explanation when it comes, as it is beginning to come. We scarcely as yet realise how vitally and subtly our concepts of Good and Evil have changed within the last twenty years. As a matter of downright fact, we have, indeed, even begun to realise—as apart from mere statement—the meaning of “sin” itself as “experience”. So far, at least, has finite Man reached through to the Infinite Meaning.

All we can see or say at this time is that if Man did not have such experiences as sin and pain against which

to fight by use of that free-will which is divine, he would be no more than a sort of automaton—a marionette controlled by strings. Perfect, not because he had made himself perfect, but because he was so made by an omnipotent God. And which one of us would not revolt from so terrible a fate and, instead, gladly choose the path of pain and effort to the stars!

I believe that the new light now breaking in upon us, combined with another thing, will bring us closer to the “feeling” if not the actual solution, of the problem of the use by God of sin and suffering, which, be sure, will not always be necessary as spurs to the evolution of Man in his advance from spirit clothed in matter to spirit freed from matter. That other thing is Science, which I shall hope later to show is not the enemy of Religion but religion’s helpmeet. I will go further and say that already, “as in a glass darkly”, that illuminating phrase of Paul, we are beginning dimly to apprehend this solution and that it is to such apprehension that the mind of man has been preparing through the ages.

The New Message, now delivering, will, be sure, embrace something of First Causes and so reconcile the problem of the sweet-mercilessness of a Merciful God. But the solution will not come, in the beginning, so much by *reason* as *intuition*—for intuition, that is to say, “feeling”, only becomes demonstrable in its later stages. An intuition which, in our day, is for the first time being blended with reason in a sort of Götterdämmerung or Twilight of the Gods.

For at last we seem to have arrived at a time when we are beginning to realise as we can see in our novels and plays and poetry, in our Press and on our platforms, that some day *we men shall become as gods*, heirs that we are to a divine heritage limitless and progressive.

Already, for example, as many of us know, we are dimly aware of what seem to be truths in mathematical science which vanish upon *statement*. All truth is "apprehended" before it can be stated, reason itself being but the method of demonstration of an already apprehended truth. And this, as the modern mystic knows, is precisely what is happening in the newer concepts of pain and sin now making themselves felt within the mind of in particular the "artist-philosopher".

And so one feels that the new Idea of God and of ourselves as part of Him, which is emerging before our wondering gaze is, for the first time, holding a lantern to the origins and reasons for Sin and Suffering as man advances upon his starward path of pain and knowledge and initiation. It is the light neither of earth nor heaven, sent not "to save us from our sins", but to save us *to* the Eternal Purpose behind us and all life by the way of "experience" and "love".

These are the two things which each man and woman of us all desire to-day. We want experience or "proof", and with it—love. The former that our God may be a God of Reason and the latter that He may be one of intuition and faith.

Only those two things.

Reason and Faith—the faith that itself is *Love*.

But this light no longer comes from the East, but from the West.

The East, from which once all the religions and all the "saviours" came, no longer gives to the world either its religions or its thinkers, but seems to have sunk into a coma of despair and that misinterpretation of *karma* as "fate" instead of "tendency" and that which we sow, we reap, which has held the East in thrall for two thousand years. It is from out the West that all the living ideas of God now are coming, not so much

through the orthodox channels of priest and pulpit as through the novel and play of ideas and from the pen and lips of the conscious creative-artist, who has always been the hope of the world, though the world has not known it.

SHIP OF STARS

Night after night, day after day,
Our Ship of Dreams, in bowsprit-play,
Lifts new stars in the faraway.

THIS concept of the Power Behind in terms of "Fate" persisted, not only in the East, but in the West—particularly in the Christian Churches, which, without exception until a generation ago, taught either predestination or hell-fire or both, and some of which still teach these things. Even in our day, the childish concept that the human soul has a span of but seventy years or so in which to prepare for eternity and, in the case of one Great Church that its "death moment" determines for ever man's destiny either in eternal bliss or eternal torment, still continues.

So far as Christianity is concerned, for the idea was always implicit in certain Eastern philosophies, it is only in our day that the idea of this world and death as but "episodes" or stages in what is for man and woman a progress eternal, has begun to hold the stage. With the gradual yielding of the barbaric pagan teachings of hell-fire and an anthropomorphic God of vengeance, there has entered that idea of pilgrimage through eternity which we find both implicit and explicit in not only the newer forms of thought of the "theosophic" and "spiritualist" type, but even in the pulpit and pen utterances of the more orthodox persuasions. These later concepts may be crystallised into the allegory of a "ship of stars" in which we endlessly travel through the spheres—that is through spheres of thought and "vibration" out of which we break, one

by one, into spiritual conditions and vibrations ever higher and finer.

Generally, and with the inevitable exceptions, we had hitherto always thought of “God” as someone and something for ever fixed.

The Idea of God of the average church member, for instance, was as rigid and determined as one of the fixed stars set above us inexorably in space. It was, indeed, to get away from the un-humanity of such a God that men and women unconsciously took refuge in the human Jesus.

We would not admit the existence of any other idea of God than the one which, all unknowing, we had each one of us made in his or her own image—but which, however much it varied in detail, always had a common quality of implacability and un-change, which, again, in its turn, was our atavistic concept of Omnipotence, derived from an age when fear ruled man in his religion.

We did not realise until this present age, when we are entering a God-concept blended of wisdom and love, as opposed to one of justice and fear, that though there was but one God, there were as many God-concepts as human beings, and that the path God-wards was not a single track, but a criss-cross of tracks on the sea of life, now running together, now separating, of which there were as many as there were human souls.

In a word, that each one of us had to find his own path to God, who, so to speak, had set the haven of Himself as goal for our ship of stars, but left to our free-will the working and the charting of that course by crew, sextant and compass.

We have each to find his or her path, even though we can, each of us, be helped by and ourselves help

others along that path. We are all lonely souls, but we can speak sometimes with our friends—always with the one Friend and Comrade, God, who has been with the human soul before its entry into life and matter and who never leaves us from birth to death, and after.

We did not realise all this because we had hitherto confused Theology with God. Whereas, in truth, the theologian, with his dogmatic conceptions, had no closer connection with or understanding of the God of whom he professed to be the special if not the sole interpreter, than any other human being. Indeed, as we go on and as you and I, sailing for this short hour the same path of the trackless waters, may see, the theologian often possibly knew less about the Power Behind than any layman; has perhaps often been farther from that Power; and again and again has been subtle though always unconscious antagonist of a God of Freedom—and therefore of Love.

And as we sail together, you and I, in a little storm-tossed craft which will often seem to lie under the shadow of death, we shall take just this one comfort to ourselves. That, though we are ignorant, we are at least *seeking to understand*, and that if we hold ourselves humbly but courageously in our search with and for God the Lover and Friend, the almighty arms will encircle us so that we shall suffer no hurt, and that finally, like the storm-tossed sailorman, we shall “find ourselves at the haven where we would be” and where He would have us to be.

And as we sail, we shall be careful only for one thing—only to hold our course for the thing of many facets—the pale Pole Star of Truth.

You and I will receive many shocks to preconception because our compass points to that star. We shall often feel inclined to let go the wheel and the ship to

sail whither she will. We may even want more than once to turn back and sail into the smooth broad waters of Orthodoxy and theological dogma, which are the waters of Lethe.

But, ever, we shall hold through storm and doubt, sometimes close-reefed, sometimes with everything set from flying jib to royal in our Ship of Stars—at her wheel, be sure, more than you and I—that Pilot who is at the helm of every human ship in its eternal journey through the Spheres.

VI

BIRTH AND DEATH AND GOD

Baby-play of birth and death,
 Blowing bubbles with a breath,
 Blown out of darkness into light,
 Drawn back again within the night—
 A tiny pulsing fragile shell,
 Within it heaven, within it hell,
 Pris'ning the fledgling soul for all to see
 The mortal meshing immortality,
 Painting itself upon the world of time,
 A filmy thing, inholding the divine. . . .
*The glory fades—the panting soul set free
 To lose itself within eternity.*

(The Bubble Blower.)

GOD, the pilot, is, as I said, always at the side of the helmsman from the instant of His appearance at birth to His exit through the Gates of Death—which are, for Him, the Gates of the Morning. That ship of stars which He pilots through our earthly life and which, having cleared Death's portal, He pilots in another sphere—for Man never drops the Pilot.

Death is but the little door through which we pass into the next room of Our Father's "house of many mansions". Our Father holding us by the hand so that as we feel the hush of the sable wings we shall not fear.

If we imagine that each soul born into this world of flesh is an entirely new soul, I think we shall be mistaken. Our Friend, be sure, had known that young life before it was born into this world, had nurtured it and prepared it for that birth which itself is but one more *experience*.

It seems reasonable to suppose that the Child does not come from nothing. That the human soul has some history. That not only must it have earthly parents of flesh and blood but also a spiritual parentage, going back far beyond its jump into this world, a crying, striving, helpless thing.

We know at any rate that such has been taught by various world religions, that the Early Christian Church held some such view, and that the New Testament itself has references to this idea of the soul having had its history and experiences long before it makes its immediate bow upon the stage of this tiny world of ours.

Some of the Great Teachers even went so far as to say that this earth is but a school, one of many, and that it is one to which we return again and again until we have learnt our lesson. Buddha taught it. Zoroaster taught it. I believe that Jesus taught it. But no one of them, so far as I know, has ever asserted that when a child is born, it is its first appearance upon any stage, anywhere!

That the child-soul upon each birth *appears* to have to begin its education all over again, is to say no more than that it has to develop *consciousness* and that it has gradually to unfold, from its past, its reserves of accumulated experience and knowledge. This we see in particular in the child-prodigy, whether musician or mathematician, a phenomenon which long has puzzled the psychologist. The phenomenal powers of an infant Beethoven or Mozart in the realm of music, of a Jesus or a Buddha in the realm of pure thought, could not have been “inherited” from what were often quite ordinary ancestors.

Now to pass from birth to its blessed and necessary climax—“death”, itself a dying into new life.

I believe "death" to be the supreme delusion of man. I believe that its conquering and especially the conquering of its concomitant Fear is our special work in the school of earth. I believe from the persistently piled up evidence, not only of psychic research carried out under strictly scientific conditions but to the common experience of mankind and womankind who have again and again spoken with those who have returned to tell us "there is no death", that we are in our day conquering "The Great Illusion".

Some of our first scientists have now been compelled by the evidence to admit that "death is but a sleeping and a forgetting" . . . forgetting for a little while. That, after the pushing open of the door of "death", we find ourselves in a new world—the world of the etheric in which spirit, freed from flesh, finds new perspectives. But a world yielding in its turn to others, with the probability that we, so to speak, "die from life to life", in what is a never-ending perfecting.

But already are we peeping through that door whilst still on earth—thousands are doing it—nay, millions. Man even now for the first time in the history of the human race is taking wings unto himself and rising into the upper air, becoming an inhabitant of two worlds—the worlds of earth and air—and with it, is lifting out of the visible world into the Worlds Invisible—for all these physical translations are symbols of mental and spiritual growth. He is doing more. Whilst still in this world, he is deliberately and consciously preparing himself for his next life in another sphere and of another vibration. We are living in "The Age of Miracles"—an age in which "dreams come true".

And I believe that our Friend, signalling to us, and breaking through to us, has been for thousands of years

hammering on the other side of the wall of Death. That is the wall of the Great Illusion behind which we were penned by the idea that this life was either the only life or that it was by nature segregated from the life of the World Invisible and that God Himself was also penned within His domain and though occasionally communicate, separate from us.

Now, at last, in our day we can hear the tapping on the wall, heralding the breaking through to our hearts and even to our *minds*—a much more difficult matter, for Man’s intuition is convinced long before his reason!

Man is, indeed, for the first time in evolution passing from the “instinctive-emotional” to the “conscious-emotional”—that is, his emotions are at last becoming controlled. By the side of this, all other metamorphoses are trivial!

To accomplish this, the Almighty Friend used the harrow of a war without parallel in history, to pass over the unconsciousness of Man and tear up his preconceptions and brute-instincts and so make him ready for the new harvest of the Mind, which indeed would seem to be the purpose of all war, as world-thinkers of the most varied types are beginning to realise. And with that realisation, mankind has, I think, advanced one more step to understanding the paradox of suffering in a world created by a God of Pity.

So, from birth to death, He stands by our side, sometimes wheedling, sometimes spurring, sometimes disciplining—but always loving us. Nothing too trivial, nothing too foolish for Him to notice and in which to help us—for did not His greatest Son teach that “the very hairs of our heads are numbered”?

Between these two mile-posts of Birth and Death, as

we race starward, that Greater Friend watches us, rejoicing at our victories, sympathising with our defeats, and, as I assuredly believe, *sorrowing* with us as well as rejoicing.

And if you who read this think that it is "beneath" the Power which is Behind All to sorrow and to be happy, I would only ask you this question which I also ask of myself: "If this be so, why is it that you and I, each of us part of God, can weep and laugh if the Great Heart *of which we are part*, cannot feel our sorrows and our joys?" We are part of Him and He is part of us. Our sorrows are His sorrows—our joys, His.

If God our Friend could not suffer, then also could He not be happy. He could not be happy if He could not suffer.

One other thing. If it be asserted that, being divine, He cannot be human, the reverse must also be true about ourselves—that as we are human we cannot be divine. But we all of us know and what is better, *feel*, in each one of us something of divinity. We know instinctively that we are of the stuff of which the gods are made, godlike beings even the most degraded and the most ignorant of us, for if we did not know it, then why do we, from birth to death, century after century, despite that degradation and ignorance, despite misery and defeat, strive to become better men and women? Why do we poor brave men and women, *always*, not sometimes, in the end take the harder path of duty than the softer easier ways?

To that question, no rationalist, no atheist, no dilettante intellectual has any answer. It is the one question which leaves them dumb.

VII

FREE-WILL

King of life and king of death,
Free to pass from breath to breath.
Franked to good, to evil free,
Claimant of immortality—
King of glory, king of pelf,
King of all except himself.

BEHIND Birth and Death stands Free-Will.

It is upon this "free-will" that I think we should dwell for a moment, if only because it is the motive force of our planet. As Jesus Himself has told us and in very many ways, free-will stands behind all phenomena and all experience on this little earth of ours—and, as one dares to imagine, behind that "Father's House of many Mansions" which is the Universe.

Take free-will out of our world and it becomes a dead world, for you have taken the life-principle itself. It is upon the principle of free choice that I believe the Universe itself has been built. Nor is this mere theory.

We can test this by experience. We *feel* it by experience. Always man resents the idea that he is "fated", that his existence is mapped out for him by some blind but highly intelligent Fate, and blindness and high intelligence, as we see in the case of the scientific world in particular run in double harness more often than is supposed. He hates to think that he is a doll, with the strings pulled from somewhere behind the scenes by some Marvellous Manipulator. He will be, he *is* master of his own fate!

This resentment against manipulation, a resentment

not only human but divine, for me at least *proves* the existence of free-will.

Before this overmastering conviction of even the humblest, all the barren discussions of "Free-Will *versus* Determinism" become so many "words—words—words". The words of the academic scholars, who, because their *hearts* are shut, the conclusions of their brains will always be wrong.

No man can think right who cannot also feel. The scientist, as his blood-brother, the theologian, whose dogmas he has now replaced by his own, has attempted the impossible—to make the brain function without the heart. As well ask the "heart-less" marionette to stand up and work of his own volition!

For amongst all those other lights now breaking in upon us is the one which is showing us the nakedness of those libraries of books written by philosophers and metaphysicians subtle of brain, of heart unknowing! Conjurers of words, these black magicians of "knowledge", have been playing with, rather than *living*, ideas. They have caused the little ones to stumble. But their day is passing . . . though they know it not, it is already past!

Again and again must they return to the babies' class on this school of earth, and work out, life on life, "in fear and trembling" the lesson that Man the potential god, of a free-will that ultimately is limitless as it is divine, cannot live by abstract thought alone, but must have behind it and before, *feeling* and *action*.

I believe that it is through this universal principle of Free-will that our Friend works. Here we begin to feel the nature and reason for that Sin and Suffering which, coming to play their parts as temporary but not, as I think, eternal stimulants, have to be overcome by the Free-will of man. If you and I could, without

self-effort, be “made good” by some Divine Arbiter, which one of us, I ask again, would choose so contemptible a way out of experience?

It is the resistances of life, in other words, of “experience”, which make that life worth living, and, when the time comes, worth dying, so that we may arise from our ashes and live again.

Nor, as I have already indicated, do I think that for ever will sin and suffering accompany us on our way through the stars. The time will yet arrive in Man’s evolution when, replaced by other *stimuli*, we shall advance in that House of many Mansions which is our home and in which the Master of the House is our Friend.

VIII GOD AND SINNER

God the Man, and Man the Child—
God and sinner reconciled.

MAN has been in a muddle about God ever since his emergence from the Lower Form, into the nostrils of which that God “breathed . . . the breath of life; and man became a living soul”. But in nothing has he been more muddled about His Maker than in His relation to sin and the sinner, and in relation to the form which Sin takes in the mind of that Maker. He is now, as it seems to me, for the first time, coming out of that muddle.

Hitherto, we have regarded Him in relation to our sins as at best a “just” God—that cold hateful word which seems to exclude all love and all humanity. We have rarely thought of Him as indulgent to or understanding of those sins which form so large a part of the daily lives of all human beings. The “farthest human” we had reached was to think that He might be “sorry” for us when we sinned.

As for *loving* us because of them—that would have seemed blasphemous—that convenient word which itself covered a multitude of sins.

We forget in all this that God is “human” as well as divine. In our artificial and even ludicrous separation of Him from life, that is to say, from ourselves, like the exponents of the Blind Science—theology—we have imagined Him to be infinitely concerned with such abstractions as fine-spun argument concerning His Nature and especially with the punishment of our sins.

It is this artificial idea which is behind our refusal to think of Him as being concerned with the simple things of our everyday lives. With what we eat and drink, with the clothes we wear. With our sports and pleasures—with, above all, Marriage and Sex—that "Sex" which, in its multitudinous forms, is the driving force behind life. And as for humour—it has seemed to us blasphemous to associate "God" with that!

Poor little we! With our strait-jacketed ideas of what is and what is not "proper"—the Finite laying down rules for the Infinite!

I believe that at last, thanks be to Him, we are realising that He is concerned with all these things. No longer shall we keep the "forgiveness" of our sins for the attention of our God—but also our pleasures and joys—even that thing most remote from Him of all—the work in the world by which we live.

For our Friend interests Himself as much in our pleasures and politics, in our economics and our work, as we do ourselves—no more and no less—for He, always working under the Natural Law of which no man has ever seen any infringement at any time, can only feel in proportion as *we* let Him feel. If we cut off the communicating cord by hanging up the telephone every time we switch over to politics or economics or pleasure, feeling for some obscure reason that these things are outside His almighty scope, He cannot make the connection again until we, of our own free-will, do so.

.

Now I am sure that nobody, not even we ourselves, understand how and why we sin so well as God, our Father. And I want you to notice just this. The most beautiful and "human", as He was the greatest of all His teachers, Jesus of Nazareth, was always

extremely indulgent and even loving to sin and sinners. He took, indeed, exactly the opposite view of the theologians who profess to speak in His name.

This attitude he made clear for all time in the stories of the Magdalene and of "the woman taken in adultery".

Not only that, but he deliberately consorted with the sinner, rather than with the "good"—and that not merely "to do them good"—that heartless, exasperating quality of the professing Christian and professional philanthropist—but because He knew that the generous sinner was often nearer to life and living than, for example, the "unco' guid" and that for him, if only because he had "passion" and "driving force", there was often more chance of holiness than those others.

You can always do something with driving force—even bad driving force. But with impassivity and self-righteousness, even God Himself can do nothing. The men and women who have been the greatest saviours of souls alive before the Lord have frequently been those who once lived directly evil lives, from Francis d'Assisi downwards. But who ever yet made a missionary of the "unco' guid"!

One of the peculiar as it is one of the more pregnant verses of the Bible is to be found in Luke, vii. 47, the true meaning of which seems to have eluded the churches: "Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

The speaker is Jesus. The woman, Mary Magdalene.

He walked with the criminal and wretched, because He knew them not only to be in need of His love and His Father's love, but He knew them to be more ready

for that love than some of the so-called “holy ones” of life—those “professing christians” who are just “professors”!

No one knew so well as Jesus that anybody might be closer to life and the understanding of God than those men of spotless integrity who “sinless”, live after a rule, heartless, and without God. As for the evolved or even the simple souls who were truly good, as He said Himself: it is not they that are whole that need a physician, but they that are sick.

One other thing this Great Heart knew. That the only real sins were those of the hard heart—of hypocrisy and insincerity and that turning from the light of God which is the one sin “unforgivable”. For these “hypocrites”, as He called them, like His forerunner, John the Baptist, He reserved His almost only shafts of sarcasm and of wrath. “Oh! generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” was John’s retort to those formalists of dogma, who, viewing God as “intellectuals” and holding themselves “sinless”, and their skirts in intellectual detachment from contact with the sinner, our world so often regards as apostles of virtue.

These “Professionals of Virtue” are everywhere admired—we admire them as we admire the professional philanthropist or the “professional” politician. In our muddle, we have got our human values all upside down Not so, the Nazarene.

It was not that He, like His and our Father, did not know that those others of high position and estate needed Him, for need Him most desperately they did though they themselves did not know it any more than they know it to-day! for wealth, like brain, is often deeply unconscious. It was only that, their hearts being hard, He knew they had not yet made ready for

God to enter. So was it also with the rich young man, who turned his back upon the Jesus whom we feel instinctively he loved. "For he had great possessions. . . ."

And if He did not appeal to the Pharisees and Sadducees who were the prototypes of the proud high-stomached compromisers who, sometimes, as leaders of institutionalized religion, have followed them in our day, it was not because He did not love them or was not sorry for them, it was only that He knew such appeal to be unavailing until they themselves under the harrow of broken pride used their free-will once more to turn their faces towards the light.

Jesus was never "tolerant" to insincerity and the vice of pride. He was only tolerant to "sin".

We cannot be too clear about the meaning of all this. None of this means that God wishes us to sin or that Jesus, His "Eldest Son", wished us to sin. It is only that there are worse sins than "sinning"! The sins of self-righteousness and spiritual complacency which are so often accompanied by what may be called a technical freedom from sin.

The only sins that matter take place in the heart. Once more, it is *motive* that counts. What is sin for one man or woman is not sin for another. It all depends upon the rung in the ladder of evolution or consciousness which he or she has reached.

You may hold yourself free from active committal of sin for ever and yet for ever be a whited sepulchre full of dead men's bones. You may sin and sin again, but if your heart is living because you have kept it living, your sins will but become "stepping-stones to higher things".

For, be sure, Sin, like all other things of our world, has its purpose—a terrible purpose if you will—but "purpose". It is not there for nothing. It is the fire to

the burned child—like the fire, it is there to warn as well as to teach and to help.

Nevertheless, so long as we were taught as children that God was out to “punish” our sins, instead of teaching us by their ugly results and as a matter of personal decency to abandon them for the more excellent ways of thought and of living, we avoided sin artificially, through fear, and in doing so sinned the more deeply. If as children we had been told, what the churches and the theologians should, I think, have told us, that when we sin, He is by our side understanding and forgiving and helping, it would have been a matter of “honour” for us not to yield to sin and so hurt our Friend. For which one of us would deliberately seek to “trick” God?

No man can fool God, because no man can fool himself that of God is part.

Sin itself is but a *stage*. One through which we have to pass as introduction to other and higher stages. “Sinning” is a childlike quality. “When I was a child, I spake as a child . . . but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” As we grow up spiritually, Sin, as a means of *experience*, will fall from us as a garment worn out, with which we have finished. It will, like its twin—Suffering—be replaced by other and higher types of “experiences”.

What those may be we cannot yet even guess. But be sure, the day will come when on our upward road there will be “no more suffering, no more pain”. One day, our path will be one of happiness, which itself is also experience. Man does not learn *only* by suffering.

Indeed, in our stage of evolution, we have become so accustomed, so calloused to sin and suffering as essentials of our everyday lives, that the absence of either in ourselves, or in other people, makes us vaguely

uneasy. So does Man hug his sins—even his pains, and by so holding even attracts them.

God, I feel, is now working through that emanation which we call His “Holy Spirit”, in the minds and hearts of Man to accustom him little by little to living and, above all, to developing without sin and without pain. Whether in the elementary school of this little earth, Man can ever become painless and sinless is very doubtful. For when sin, and with it its result, pain—for all suffering comes from sin, which itself is a living outside Natural Law—leave man, he in his turn will leave the earth, upon which, having reached that higher “vibration”, he could not stay even if he would. Or so it seems to me. He will be “translated”.

When pain and sin cease from off this earth, the earth itself becomes meaningless, its purpose having been accomplished. When things have accomplished their purpose they die, this being the law of life . . . and death.

It is up to a point idle for Man the Finite to ponder in his present stage of development whether God could not have used other *media* than those of sin and suffering to force him along his path from Animal to Star. It must be enough, at present, for us to remember that no man has ever been able to conceive any other method, apart from that of reducing us, as I have said, to the ignobility of Divine Automata—which would mean the loss of the sign manual of humanity—its free-will. Nevertheless, speculation is not itself a crime—indeed, I believe we are all meant to wrench the extremest secret from the heart and mind of the all-loving God who, I am assured, wishes us to do so. He is there, not to be blindly obeyed by Man the Slave but to be criticised and questioned by Man the Prince of Life.

Blind obedience only results in horrid uniformity—the uniformity of dogma and of death.

There is, however, something vital to be remembered when considering the attitude of our Friend towards the sin and the sinner. That is the relation of *thought* and *action*.

All sins, that is to say all aberrations from the Law of God which is Natural Law, take place first in the heart. The *action* itself is but the aftermath.

Man, in his tortuous ascent out of matter into pure spirit—for he is even now, though encased in matter, “a spirit”—is, in our day, making spiritual history by learning that action is but the “result”—but that thought is everything for it is the “cause”.

This alone marks enormous advance—it marks a new “breathing” into Man of consciousness—that is, of “soul.” It marks the passing from a lower vibration to a higher.

In the awful muddle into which we have got about God and Sin, the chief perhaps is that so long as we stop at the *thought*, nothing much matters! Not so Jesus, who in that so often misquoted and half-understood love-thought: “That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart”, once more in a sentence, struck deep into the human heart. Jesus, I think, meant that something does actually *happen* when we think. *Thought itself is an entity*. When you *think* a thing—that thing begins to *live*!

Already, the scientist is proving the objectivity of thought by the camera, thought now having been photographed by Fukurai, the Japanese, and, I think, by others.

Jesus knew all this as a Master of Life. In that lightning-flash of phrase, of which he was master, He showed us, His brothers and sisters, how to find newer and deeper meaning in the things which we take for granted and by which we live, than either theologian or priest has found—and to find them for ever.

As one sometimes sees for an instant in the face of an ignorant and seemingly stupid young girl something of the angel, hears in the voice of a young boy something of the stars, or in the songs of a country, itself sunk in wretchedness, the unconscious purpose and destiny of that country—so Jesus was able to indicate by a pregnant sentence the deeper meaning behind.

In the phrase of the woman taken in adultery, He but meant that thought was always the basic, determinative thing in all life and *action*. That was all. Even at that, he did no more judge us poor vagrant flimsies of life than he judged that woman, He who fraternized with the “unfortunates” of life, whom He never called “fallen women”. For none knew better than He that we have all of us “fallen short of the glory of God”.

We need this divine tolerance, that is the divine understanding, of the Nazarene towards the sinner. Always, like Him, bearing in mind the two things of which we have written—that the stage of evolution reached by the individual soul alone can determine what is and what is not “sin” for that soul, and that “passion”, which in its varied forms is the driving force of all life, is to be lived and loved for its own sake—in its final stage to be transformed and sublimated into that “passion of Christ” of which we speak so often without understanding.

And in all this we shall be careful how we judge. “Judge not that ye be not judged” did not mean, it seems to me at least, that we were never to exercise our

judgment of what is right and wrong, in others as in ourselves—it simply meant, I think, what I have here said.

God never blames anybody. He never “scolds” anybody. There is no record in the New Testament—that is to say in the vital part of the Bible—to show that he does either. There is no record of Jesus Himself ever having done either—no, not even in His intense hatred of the insincerity and “unco’ guidness” of the Scribes and Pharisees, did He “scold”. He simply lashed them with the whip of the plain facts about themselves.

Even in the extremity of the Cross, He did not blame or chide. He said: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

In that immortal climax, He made clear that only one thing was at the bottom of all sin—*ignorance*, and one other thing, the only thing indeed which can cause us to “sin”—the misuse of our free-will. For when a man “sins in ignorance” he does not sin. Otherwise, all deviations from the Absolute Perfectitude that we conceive as “God” would have to be classed as “sins”, which they are not.

There is, indeed, only one deadly sin—because it strikes at the heart of all progress—that is where the individual turns his face from the Light of the World which to a greater or less degree infiltrates every human heart, from the savage to the saint, and from the madman to the mystic—that light neither of earth nor sky. That is to say, that beautiful term used by Jesus, the Light of the Holy Spirit, the sin against which even is not “unforgivable”—for who would dare set bounds to the mercy and understanding of God?

In a sentence, and once again, in all action, in all thought, *motive* is everything.

God, our Friend, knows that sin brings its own punishment. It is not for Him to add to that punishment. Indeed, He could not if He would. He is not the God of Vengeance but the God of Love. He does not wish us to sin. On the contrary, He wishes us to learn from our experience of sin so that, like the woman taken in adultery, we may sin no more.

Our Father, like our Elder Brother, Jesus, is infinitely loving to the *sinner*—always understanding of the *sin*.

"Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid!"

GOD AND THE SEXES

Oh blinded womb!

from which comes darkness, blood, and flame,
 Within its narrow coil, love's pleasure and love's pain—
 A pulsing whorl, from out which cry of birth
 Calls streaming life from envelope of earth,
 And as it labours heavy, guides 'twixt breath and breath
 The shooting star of life within the black star of death. . . .
 For life to teetering come again—faint, urgent spark
 Flicking itself once more from out the dark.
 'Neath loving-lustful mask, leads bucko, maid and wife,
 Immortal 'phemeræ within the Dance of Life.
 Now dominant it stands upon its sprawly feet,
 Now slinking earthward, seeking its passioned meat,
 Now lightning-slashed, its crest enclouded lifts
 To show itself suspiring 'tween the rifts
 And now telluric, earthbound, seeks the sod,
 Once more, triumphant, to lift itself to God. . . .

And when its little moment spent, love's spasm and love's pain,
 It passes back within its coil, to coil itself again.

So twisted and confused have we poor humans become in our efforts "to find out God" and so desperately have the professionals of religion, with their starved imaginings, helped us to that muddle, that when one speaks of "sex" one instinctively thinks of sin. That marks, I think, the low-water mark of the fall of love and romance from its high estate as one of the lovelier manifestations of "our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name"!

The flesh, in particular, has indeed become for millions, and especially for certain Christian churches and sects, something from which to flee, or, at most, to be thwarted and limited. If we want final proof of our supreme muddle regarding the relation of God, our

Friend, and the senses—of that “temple of His soul” of which we are always talking and rarely understanding, it is this—no church and no theologian has ever told us where love ends and lust begins! Love and lust have, for the exegetist of morals, become more or less synonymous.

Some of these “anti-flesh” Churches, indeed, whilst regarding sex from this point of view, have been illogic enough to place a woman, next to the Trinity, as the chief hearer of prayers—that Woman who is supposed to be the frail temptress of weak Man! And it is also one of these bodies of religious opinion which, regarding marriage as a “sacrament”, and therefore presumably “holy”, insists that the physical act of consummation must only have “procreation” for its object and not that “creation” which is romance and which for the Church has no meaning. And it is the same communion which regards a priest-made ceremony as binding the man and woman who “consummate” together for life, irrespective of their spiritual or other affinity! exactly as it forbids the divorce of men and women who hate each other and who may have nothing spiritually or intellectually in common.

How have we not degraded that flesh which is, at once, on this earth the temple of God and the expression of His spirit!

We beget our children secretly, furtively—almost apologetically. Of “love” we speak in corners. We do still regard sexual association, even between lovers, in some vague way as “unspiritual” and as “a concession to the flesh”, some feeling even that it may be against the laws of God. And when we wish to become very holy, we just cut it out altogether, and, as in the case

of those excellent intentioned, but often wrong-headed old gentlemen of the Early Church, become hermits and “saints”.

I believe it is to what are miscalled “sins of the flesh”, but which are in their essence really sins of the imagination and of the spirit—the spirit of life—that Our Father is especially understanding and pitiful.

I have always felt that chastity of life and continence of thought are essentials to all progress. But I have always known, as I believe God Himself knows and as we have learnt definitely from the spirit of that Jesus of Nazareth which has been given to us to be a lantern unto our feet: that until a man or woman has reached a certain evolutionary point in their lives, it is as ludicrous to expect them all to have the same moral standard as it is to expect all people to like champagne or caviare. What is one man’s meat is another man’s poison in matters of sinning as in matters of gastronomics.

One of the major errors of the churches has been to more or less lay down the same rule for all men and women irrespective of their stage of evolution—something that Jesus Himself never did. In matters of sex, it would obviously be obtuse and ignorant to lay down the same law of monogamy for the developed European and the Australian Aboriginal, or even for what, in his way, is the highly developed Zulu—one of the reasons for the failure of so much missionary work all over the world.

Jesus never laid down rules on details—only on basic principles. He taught us “to love one another”—and there He left it. It troubled Him no more than the dogma which He invariably ignored or even

subtly chastised—that dogma which, later, with its inevitable “rules and regulations” for life, and a deadweight “one rule for all”, was superimposed by those who followed Him, often in all good faith, upon the simple beauty of His teaching.

God never demands of any man more than he is able to understand—that is, more than he is able to *bear*. He does not demand of the man not long emerged from the animal that he shall be monogamist—the husband of one wife—for such concept would and could have no meaning for him, any more than “marriage” for such lower souls has any meaning. But He does demand of the Man or Woman evolved to the point of *feeling* and above all, *conscious* feeling, by experience after experience in the school of earth and elsewhere, that he or she shall be faithful in thought, word and deed to the other partner; that of such evolved souls each man shall be the husband of one wife and each woman of one husband—perhaps not only here but hereafter, and not “until death doth them part”, for death itself is a superstition and parts nothing. For, as it seems to me, where true love has united them, it unites them also Over There.

The idea of “twin-souls”, I am persuaded, like so many other unconscious avowals by Man of Truth through a common saying, has in it more than imagination. But—what is “imagination”?

For as science progresses it is becoming increasingly difficult to decide in any “imagining” what is false and what true. What were once regarded as the wild—purely conjectural flights out of space and time of an H. G. Wells, an Edgar Allan Poe or almost any of the great poets you care to name, are in our day becoming the facts of science. Had anyone asserted even a few short generations ago that a man in Australia could

hear a man speaking in London or that a street scene in one part of the world could be “flighted” to another, he would have been regarded as not a little mad. Yet to-day wireless and television are the common facts of our everyday life.

We may yet find in this age of the breaking down of barriers that just as all thought, as we have said, becomes in its hotted moment of life itself a living thing, what we call “false” imagination is but another facet of truth, and that, just as something cannot proceed from nothing, so behind all thought there is some basis of fact. We may indeed make the supreme discovery that the false is but the comparatively false, that is to say false only at the point of time in which it is imagined—such “falseness” itself being but an attempt at the statement of some truth later to emerge.

One other thing I have realised in my own life. That the divine driving force of “passion”, or “feeling”, or “urge”, call it what you will, is in its essence the same force, whatever the final form it may assume. It is in its transformation through the use of our free-wills that alone it finds its direction and effect. This primeval urge can become in the relations of the sexes, for instance, and to take only one of its manifestations, love or lust, like or dislike, fair romance or foul materialism—just as we transform it. Passion is the driving force behind all beauty as behind all crime—behind all art and all ugliness. For passion is *feeling*!

With that passion, our Father can do anything. Without it, nothing. For, as I have said before, even Infinity becomes impotent in face of those who to escape trouble always take the Middle Way.

It is chiefly because the holy men and the churches have failed to recognise this eternal fact underlying all life that those holy men have so often turned from the flesh with horror, from dancing and singing and the theatre and the innocent pleasures of life—and, in the notable instance of one religious body, have persistently regarded Woman as “the temptress”, a pit into which one of the greatest of them all fell, and even though we read that such women “ministered unto Jesus of their substance”. That Paul who, himself sex-tormented, so often “spoke by permission and not of commandment”. That is to say, without “inspiration”. For to lose romance is to lose inspiration.

How does God, the Friend of Life, regard the thing that is Life’s origin—“Sex”—perhaps the most basely misused word in the English tongue, one which is so often the synonym for lust and filth—that sex which divinely divides life into the two magnetic poles from the interplay of power between which all evolution springs?

If we accept Jesus as His most direct mouthpiece and the New Testament gospels as a fair though not necessarily always accurate or uninterpolated record, of His teachings, then God regards sex not with either horror or contempt, but with favour and with love. In no recorded utterance of His does Jesus ever belittle the love of the sexes, whether in its purely fleshly or purely spiritual form of which it is compounded. He was Himself a loved guest at the marriage of Cana in Galilee. Even when love assumes the form of lust, as in the case of the woman taken in adultery, He holds for the sinner no reproach—only infinite understanding.

Never do we hear Jesus tell us that His and our Father, with whom He was able, I believe, to speak

directly, regards love or marriage as unnatural or distasteful or sinful. Never in any single place does He advocate extreme or persistent asceticism or tell His apostles that they must not marry. If there be one thing which more than another stands out in the New Testament record of Jesus, it is that asceticism, save as an incidental training for a special purpose, held no place in His philosophy of love and service.

All the fulminations against woman and the joy of love and life of those that followed Him came later as superimpositions upon His own teaching. Superimpositions often by courageous and good men, but by men of warped understanding and twisted vision, who failed to see the spiritual significance of the physical union of a man and woman in love. The Pauline attitude to woman, for instance, as shown in particular in that view of her as an outlet for man's passion in the statement that “it is better to marry than to burn”, tells the story.

That Jesus sometimes fasted is but to say that, as we now know in the domain of psychology, occasional fasting helps the mystic when he is trying to attain a certain specialised condition. It is a sort of spiritual “training” and is what physical training is to the athlete. Also, occasional abstinence from food is a fine clarifier of body and mind.

But an asceticism as a persistent rule of life He never advocated. That asceticism which has eaten out the human heart of so many Eastern religions, from Buddhism downwards, with its abstinence from meat and wine and its universal celibate rule. Even of the Buddha, as of the Nazarene when He sat down to a dish of fish and His turning the water into wine at the marriage feast, we have record of His comradely sharing a dish—one of meat with a poor man. Nor do

I believe that this young Indian prince who, before his "enlightenment", lived with his wives in his father's palace, ever preached the deadly mechanical abstinence of the Buddhist priest of our day any more than he preached the demoniacal Buddhism of Thibet, his teachings being handed down orally and not in writing, with the inevitable distortions which follow such method.

But even the Gautama Buddha did not know everything! as he himself admitted. All these Great Ones have been humble.

These great Teachers come, give their message, and after a few years that message becomes distorted by those who often honestly believe they are giving the original message. What happens to a village tale within a year we know. What happens to the story of love of a Jesus after two thousand years we also know!

But, you may say, we are faced with the puzzling fact that Jesus Himself never married.

I am of those who believe that Jesus was one of the greater *revenants*—that is He was of the order of the White Companions who, Initiates of Death, deliberately choosing the path of Service, return to earth in order to help and to enlighten the human race. I do believe that Jesus of Nazareth, in a sense never contemplated by the theologian, instead of passing on to the Higher Spheres for which He was ready, did, with His love and humility, choose to come back to our earth and once more "to take flesh".

But these Great Returning Ones are of a spiritual vibration infinitely higher than that of the flesh, something that, even if for a time they accept it, removes them from the need for the satisfaction of the

desires of the lower earthly vibration, although not from those desires and temptations themselves or from our earthly loves and fears and hates. The marriage of the flesh is not for them, although in the case of Buddha the Prince, he practised it before his *conscious* “Enlightenment”. Nor is marriage, for that matter, necessary for all men and women born in the flesh. It turns on certain factors, and those not only physical.

However that may be, only one thing can, I am sure, in God’s idea fully justify the marriage of two people—that is “love”. Any other union, at least it seems to me, He must regard as based upon misapprehension—upon ignorance. This “love” quality may have in it the physical, which is only one part, though, especially with younger people, an intensely important part of the union of the sexes. The “spiritual” it *must* have.

When Jesus said that “when they rise from the dead they neither marry nor are given in marriage” in heaven, I cannot believe that He meant that, on the Other Side, “love”, even what we call human love, was unknown. He simply meant I think, that Over There, upon a certain “vibration” being reached, known to mystics as the Fourth Plane of Vibration, the physical act of consummation is replaced by a “psycho-physical” act and then gradually by varying forms of *thought-association* or “love-vibration”, and that marriage in the sense of some of our lower vibrations of the flesh would be unknown in the world of spirit, which is of the “higher vibration”. Or as Paul said: “There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial . . . there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” He also meant more remotely, I think, that no marriage ceremony existed, and that the love existing between male and female would automatically unite them—unite them through having the same *love-vibration*. He

meant, also, if words mean anything, that marriage is "a union of spirit", which no ceremony by either priest or registrar, by church or state, can make or unmake, and of which, indeed, he never speaks anywhere as "making" a marriage. All true marriages are "made in heaven"—that is, in the human heart.

That there is "love" in the world of spirit between men and women I am sure, but that it is on an infinitely higher vibration in spirits freed from the physical body, also, I do not doubt. And as for sensation—all sensation there, spiritual or other, must be felt more intensely than here.

That our mingling of body is replaced by a mingling of spirit (if you like, of the "spiritual or etheric body") on the Other Side of Death, I believe to be true—but such spiritual mingling does take place, in greater or less degree, even now in all true marriages. There may be spiritual ecstasies as far transcending our physical ecstasies as those transcend the feelings of the lower animals.

But all this takes us into transcendental regions which lie far outside the scope of this little book and the exploration of which can be pursued elsewhere by those interested.

Marriage may, as it is contended by many, be the greatest failure of all human institutions. It is, however, the marriages which are "of the earth, earthy," marriages of convenience and necessity, loveless marriages, which are such failures. Once more, the true marriage is made in heaven.

The Heavenly Marriage is based upon natural law, for it is based upon love. God, one feels assured, stands for the love-union and for no other.

Our inhuman "theological" notion that Holy Church can "marry" an old man and a young woman

or an old woman and a young man who are held together by expediency on the one side and lust on the other, must make the angels weep, and it seems to me that God must view such marriages as “married prostitution”. We cannot fool God. And in this, as in so many things, we have, once more, got our values upside down.

And so we may believe from what we know more directly of the spiritual view of love and marriage through Jesus and from our own common sense and intuition, when uninterfered with by the dogmatist, that Our Father views *all* the relations of sex, spiritual, intellectual, or physical, as beautiful and good. He did not give us our senses either to misuse or not to use them—and non-use is perhaps the subtlest misuse of all. If He did not wish men and women to come together physically, and, as I think, to use the physical organs as “conductors” of the spirit, then why did He endow us with those organs? If we know anything of life, it is that nothing is given to us to ignore, that everything has its uses. If we know anything of God, it is that He knows more than we what is essential to us. Only theologic subtlety and the diabolism of the “schools” with their twisting of the simpler things can make it otherwise.

I will even say that the human urge, physical if you will, bringing together two people of either sex, is part of the Divine Urge. I am sure that our Friend, who knows everything we feel and hope, blesses the fruition of that urge, when it is born of decency and love. I am sure that He is glad when little children are born of that ecstasy of the flesh—and no “ecstasy” is to be despised, for to do so is to despise the ecstasy that is God! A thought which might alone give pause to the fine-pointing dialectician and arid ascetic in their diatribes against

the flesh—for the Child is the loveliest thing we know, and loveliness cannot come from something in itself unlovely. Jesus Himself chose to come back to this world as a little child.

That human passion can degrade itself into lust is but to say that men and women can turn all good things into evil if they will, that the lovely can become the unlovely, and even the divinity of "sex" become bestial. But that is not to say that the differentiation of life which we know as "sex" is in itself bad. We know that fire burns—but we also know that it can light and heat. It depends upon us, the "transformers".

"Sex", like "suffering", is a stage in man and woman's experience. It may be that as Man advances to the God and Woman to the Goddess—and we are all potential gods—on the Other Sides of life, sex falls from him and her, or, rather, is transformed—but it may be fairly assured that the Divine Principle of sex, which is the polarity of life, persists in one form or another.

God, I believe, is with the bride and bridegroom in the marriage bed as in the beds of birth and death. He is with us in our physical as in our sublimated spiritual sensations. The body is as much His channel as the ghost or soul which it hosts.

He loves us to make love when we really do love!

GOD AND ROMANCE

Once more the war-horse proud shall shrill the lists of love,
Once more the silvern trumpets call with urgent breath,
Once more the pennons wave where Beauty thrones above,
To break a lance for life within the lists of death!

ABOVE all else, whether in relation to Sex or to Life, I believe that God is a God of Romance. For romance is not only the justification of life, but is the one thing which lifts man from the animal. It is life for its own sake!

It is in the Romance of Life and Love that God the Lover finds His fullest expression for us poor migrants upon the fleeting nest of earth. It is the presence or absence of romance in the human being, whether in loving or living, which it seems to me determines the stage of her or his evolution. You can judge of the spiritual quality of any woman or man by the development of the "romantic" quality.

Romance is more than the "love-making" to which men have limited the word. It is "a way of looking at life"—and especially "at death". It is essentially the recognition that "man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God". It is a feeling for the High Adventure that is Life and of the *way* God would have us to live it.

For He will not have us live this life of ours either in the inert melancholy which so many people mistake for "earnestness" or in lightheadedness. He will, I think, have us lighthearted but not lightheaded. To face those masks of life—death and fear—with a laugh, not on the face but in the heart, I believe with all my soul is God's way.

This romance of God is the very salt and savour of living. It is the fruition of that "urge" of passion and feeling which, as I have contended in these pages, is behind all life on our earth. It is life's flower.

The martyrs faced Nero's lions with hymns on their lips and a smile on their faces. That is how God would have us face life. They lived, it is true, unromantically—but, because even the Saint cannot live without romance of some kind, they died romantically. Saint Francis of Assisi caught the spirit of that romance. The Irish, sometimes, if you like, wrongheadedly, have caught it, those Irish who in the old days called death "setting a man on the path to glory"!

The Passionate Romance of the death of Jesus upon the Cross, when the gentlest and bravest of all, the very Flower of the chivalry of spirit, laid down His life with a prayer that was a smile in the face of death for those who had hung Him there, remains for all time as the supreme Romantic Gesture—a *beau geste* at once the expression and the justification of romance.

And so I feel that God would have men love women not only for their fair flesh, nor only for their "goodness", nor in order to have children, nor for any one thing—but for *all* those things which together make up what we call "romance". He would not have men love women and women love men only because one can give to the other the ecstasy of the senses and to life its fuller evocation, but for the fine flavour of life and of love which is the romance spiritual—that romance which is its own justification, and of which all these things are but facets.

I believe that in nothing does Our Father rejoice more than when that "first fine careless rapture" of love which is of the very stuff of romance possesses man or woman. I believe it is in that moment that Man

and Woman reach closest to the ecstasy and to the *understanding* of the angels in heaven—for in the mystery and sacrament of love, as with the mystic, it is through the rapture of body and spirit that we potential gods reach in flashing moment to be lost in the tides which flame about the altars of the Most High.

And I believe that any compromise upon the *romance* of love, whatever form that romance may take, spiritual or physical or both, is a compromise in which the soul is sold for a mess of pottage and Man's divine heritage of Romance is bartered for a moment's pleasure or . . . a moment's pain.

GOD AND THE ARTIST

Those tortured ones who hang upon their crosses,
Air-borne in heady spheres out of the common ken,
Commerce with imps and angels, count all their gains as losses,
Die for the goal they know not, for those who know not them.

THE approach to God is the approach not only through Romance but through the beauty which shelters it. But a beauty informed by spirit—that is by *consciousness*. For the beauty that has behind it no spirit, only the abstract conception of the intellect, is the beauty of “form” and not of “substance”—it is the loveliness of hell which in the end turns in the mouth to dust. And all this can only be evoked by that strange magical creation—the Artist, whether he create or only interpret with pen or brush, with voice or sound.

There are two kinds of artists—the *conscious* and the *unconscious*. But there are, in its turn, two sorts of unconsciousness.

There is the artist who, still an unevolved soul, remains unconscious. But there is also the artist who, having passed from the unconscious to the conscious, having lost the spirit and fallen in love with the “form”, has once more passed back into the most dreadful, unconsciousness of all—that of the exhausted voluptuary of sensation, moving like Oscar Wilde and the “futurists”, who are of his creed, within a garden of spectral trees and ghastly flowers in which he is lost for ever. But this has been done by nations as well as individuals. The China of the past, divorcing herself from “heart” and wedding herself to intellectual abstraction and to “form”, “looped the loop” in this

way, to leave her what she is to-day—ceremonial without heart, and beauty without passion.

For art divorced from “goodness” and “heart” is Lucifer cast out of paradise. It is art in which the substance has been yielded for the shadow, in which the artist himself has become of all men the most miserable and degraded, the least qualified to lead. When our worlds of art and letters learn this lesson as some of the great artists of the past learned it, from that First Artist of all, Jesus, whose word-painting had a simple beauty which has never been equalled, to those “universal minds” of a Michelangelo or Leonardo da Vinci—a Goethe, a Shakespeare or a Beethoven, it will have learned what now has become an urgent lesson for our world—that the *conscious* Artist, that is the Artist with philosophy and religion implicit in his work, is really the leader of all life and of all thought. He is the great “Sensitive”—that is to say the great “medium” between God and Man.

The fuller recognition of what he really is and his place in evolution is now coming for the first time in the history of the human race. For to-day it is to some of our more spiritual men and women of letters—our poets in particular; to our greater painters; to our Beethovens and Wagners and Sibeliuses in the realm of the Suggestional Art, music, that we are beginning to turn for *spiritual* guidance rather than to our Churches and Churchmen. Like Jesus Himself, we are finding our Church in Life, our temples in the human heart, and our God in both.

We still think of our God as apart from beauty and from the art which alone can call forth beauty in all its fulness, except where, like so many in this day of

agnostic transition, we have altogether abandoned the Idea of God.

It is because we are still held in thrall to this un-beautiful concept of a Jehovah-God of terror and justice and righteousness rather than a God of the loveliness that is love, that we have cooped Him up within those dreadful tabernacles of brick and mortar—the little Bethels which might and probably do make the angels weep! The outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual *disgrace*.

It is because God is still to us a strictly local God, interested solely in our own particular narrow, dogmatic interpretation of His tremendous attributes, that we, as individuals, and some of our Churches, as Churches, have made our approach to Him a gloomy approach and regarded Him as a gloomy God with beauty unconcerned.

Even when in some of our congregations we have freed Him from ugly bricks and mortar and have placed Him in gracious cathedrals and looked at Him through windows mellowed with age, we have so encased Him in the strait-jackets of Orthodoxy, have so hedged Him about not with human but inhuman attributes, that whilst making His House a thing of beauty we have made its Inhabitant a Moloch of dogma and creed and their concomitant—fear.

Now of all the channels which our Eternal Friend uses to manifest Himself to us poor humans, and they are many as the stars of heaven, beauty is the first. Not merely the beauty of *form*, but of *spirit*. What are often the most developed minds of our day are beginning to think that it is not through the theologian nor even through the priest that our “Loving Heavenly Father”, as Jesus called Him, chooses to show Himself, but rather through the Artist, whether he be an artist of Sound, as in music; of Colour and Form as in

painting and sculpture; or of *Idea* as in writing. “The Artist-Philosopher” as I may term him, is, it seems to many, the most nearly of all the mouthpiece of the God in whose likeness he is made and whose likeness he strives to reproduce.

But, once more, only when the creative artist combines *thought* with a *technique* that itself springs from passionate concern, as did Jesus, that supreme artist of *Idea* in the spoken word.

For, as I have said, the artist is a “sensitive” or “medium” for impression by that God who works through “inspiration”. All human advance, human thought, and human beauty comes by inspiration. It is the fount of the saint as the philosopher—of the violinist or pianist as of the dramatist or novelist. Of the “preacher” I here say nothing, for the creative artist does not “preach”—he *expresses*! And the art that preaches has already destroyed itself.

God can only Himself *express* Himself to us in our present stage of evolution in *Form* to house *Idea*, whether that form be the spoken or written word, the painting, or the symphony.

It may, indeed one thinks must be, that in the world of spirit one spirit soul can express itself to another by pure “thought”. And it may even be that release from “form” into pure “feeling” and communication by “thinking” instead of by speech which we even now involuntarily practise by what we call telepathy, is one of the lessons of this School of Earth. But that day is not yet.

So long as man is prisoned in Matter, some kind of form would seem nearly always to be necessary for expression and communication.

When God created our earth, we are told that He did so by the utterance of the *logos* or Living Word—that is to say by the “creative thought”, just as does

His vehicle, the creative artist. And this is no mere flower of speech—but literal fact, as not only the psychic scientist but the psychologist and particularly the mathematician in our day are beginning to apprehend. So are we finding many of the literal, even “fantastic” statements, historical and other, in the books of the Old Testament, for which I personally claim no more “inspiration” than any other great work, to be confirmed by the latest scientific discoveries. For in nothing has there been so ludicrous a set back to the “rationalist” and the sceptic as in the case of some, though of course not by any means all, of the statements in the Bible, or a set back even to those who, like myself, once regarded certain parts of the Old Testament books merely as fairy-tales! The scholars have been humiliated—the intellectuals confounded.

In creating our earth, God, the Artist of the Universe, was calling order out of chaos, in other words—*form*—as the sculptor, for example, calls it out of the clay. More and more are we humans applying the term “Artist of the Universe” to Him, just as once we called Him “jealous” or “righteous” or “just” or “angry”.

God, the Artist, works at least in supreme degree, through the earthly artist who is his “sensitive” or medium, though we must not forget that, in one degree or another, he works and shows Himself through every human being, as through every flower or blade of grass. Indeed, if He did not work through the artist, and especially in this supreme degree through the conscious artist who is an initiate of life, *conscious* of the Thing Behind as of himself, I do not know through what he could work. Not, at least, through the “philosopher” pure and simple who, so often without “artistry” because so often without “life”, gives us, instead of living ideas, mental gymnastics and words.

Philosophy, which should really be and so seldom is “*religion*”, without the basis of spiritual “*form*” which is “*beauty*”, because it so often has behind it neither conviction nor passion, has, like materialist science, failed as a guiding star of humanity. Our philosophers like our “*professors*”, have often, though not always, been just “*conjurers of ideas*”—jugglers with phrases, one reason why so much of the philosophy of the past has never taken root as a *living* guide for human conduct. And indeed the men who have led and vitalised humanity have not been so much “*thinkers*” as “*feelers*”.

No man can be a great philosopher until he is first a great artist or sensitive—that is to say, that he has not only the power to *think* but to *feel*. For intellect voided of “*feeling*” is a delusion and a snare, as so much of our education and our science proves. A science which, accumulating facts laboriously and let it be said conscientiously, fails as interpreters of those facts. And I am persuaded that although nothing is ever lost and the thoughts of all the philosophers of the past have had their part in human evolution, we shall more and more proceed to relegate the majority of these philosophers to the dustheaps of time, where we have relegated so much that was once called “*great*” art and “*great*” philosophy.

In the whirligig of life, we have seen the “*professional*” theologian fail us; we have seen the professional philosopher do the same. At last, in our time, we make the oldest discovery in the world, that it is upon the “*sensitive*”, that is to say upon the “*artist*” or sensitive in ourselves, that we have to rely and that it is to the Conscious Artist as the supreme interpreter of life, because he himself *lives* and feels and thinks to a degree beyond that of other men, we have to look for guidance.

It is a strange discovery, but not a new one. For the artist-philosopher Jesus, Himself that supreme sensitive who taught man always to search *inwards*, and never outwards to creed and dogma—taught us this.

But the converse also is true. I deny that any man, for instance, can be a “great” novelist or dramatist who is not, first of all, a great thinker—for behind all really great novels and plays there stands philosophy. Great “story-telling” is not great thinking—and though it can be fascinating art, it is not, in this sense, “great” art, though even here I contend that other things being equal, the greatest story-tellers are likely to be those with at least some philosophy of life and death implicit in their tales.

When I began writing my own “novels of idea”, it puzzled me immensely and persistently that neither critics nor public recognised all this as “something that went without saying”. It still puzzles me. I found, as have many other artists of the creative word, that the novelist, and even the dramatist, was regarded primarily as a teller of stories! But we are all upon different vibrations, which inexorably compartment one from the other.

Now, at last, it is slowly beginning to be realised that the writer who really matters is as much philosopher as artist, and we are at last seeing the coming of that *artist-philosopher* who is about to bring new light to a world sorely needing it.

We humans in our muddled thinking have got into the way of thinking that art is only to “amuse”—only a titillation of the senses, and into this pit have fallen not only the Great Average but even the intellectuals—dilettanti of life. But we have gone farther. In some of our extremer sects, we have regarded art and the artist, particularly in the form of the theatre, as the

enemy of God—and the theatre itself as antechamber to the Pit.

As for the novel, perhaps in its deeper “psycho-religious” aspect, it has been and will, I think, continue to be the principal channel in our day for a knowledge of our God, from the symbolical novels of the earlier Wells to those of a Tolstoy. Not so very long ago and the “religious” homes of England and Scotland and Wales banned the novel as they banned cards—as “Satan’s Bible”. As for Ireland, who gave to the world a “cosmic” poet like Yeats and artists of ideas like James Stephens and “Æ”, within whose fairy-tales and poetry a starry philosophy lay emeshed—apart from a few individuals, she simply never read them, any more than they read or understood my own plays and “fairy”-tales with their hidden philosophy!

It is because of all this we are compelled to the belief that behind the creative conscious artist, God, the Artist, is standing. He is behind the bow-hand of the violinist; behind the chisel and mallet of the sculptor the almighty hand guides. But above all, behind the brain of the novelist and playwright, there stands the Almighty Novelist and Dramatist—whose every word is drama—whose every action art. That art, the business of which is to call forth order out of chaos.

None of us can look upon the mellow glow of a sunset without being for it a better and more sensitised man or woman, and without gaining new appreciations of the beauty of Idea behind the form and colour on which we gaze—glimpsing also Other Worlds, spacious and lovely, to make this tiny mud-ball upon which we circle in space, literally, but a *pied-à-terre*! Those who, at the point of death, have for some inscrutable reason been taken from the razor edge which separates it from life back into this world, tell us that they have, on the

Other Side, seen such sights as dazzle the imagination. It is in the swoon of beauty which fleeting comes to us in the morning-joy filled with bird-song—sometimes in that Other-world twilight, when we watch the sun slow-sinking over lonely plain, or on desolated ocean see desolated bird-wing move solitary across our vision, that we sometimes get a glimpse of that Dream-World which is reality and to which the artist alone holds the key.

That dream-land came to Thomas Gray in his country churchyard, out of which the "Elegy" was born. Coleridge entered the enchanted doors with *Kubla Khan*. And once, on an afternoon at "Sixty South", off the Horn, it stole to me on the fo'c'sle head of my old windjammer in a bewildering series of rain-bowed, pillared arches, of glowing hue, through which floated some giant white birds, halcyon birds, as I gazed down through the ever-narrowing painted vista into some land of *Tir-na-oge*—the land of eternal youth, as I stood there bathed in that light of neither earth nor sky. And then the glory had faded from about me and I was back once more upon a grey sea, through which our worn and battered seabird clambered her weary way:

Its 'chanted painted turrets mazy rise
 The 'trosses wing within the rainbowed corridors
 Pale halcyon birds that flight between the worlds
 In shining ivory to weave a fabled flight
 Within that gleaming world that hangs 'twixt day and
 night. . . .

The glory passed

And with it passed the Land of *Tir-na-oge*
 Land of eternal and un-growing youth
 To leave behind a cold grey sea, the halcyon colours fade
 Only from out froze-south the moan of night-winds come
 A lonely voice that calls from desolated sea
 The twitter of lost souls that pass even as they sing—
To leave with me
 The heavy weaving flutter of solitary bird-wing.

"THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES"

*The soundless music turning in the Void,
Whispering to us of countries far away.*

ALONE amongst the arts, I believe Music to be the art which has the power to reveal to men and women *in all stages of evolution and of the most differing capacities*, the Influence Behind Life, which we call "God".

Music is *the great unconscious art*. There are many to whom a novel by a Dostojewski, or even a Zola would mean nothing, who yet can share with women and men of high spiritual and intellectual development, though of course in another degree, the understanding of a Beethoven in his glorious "Seventh" or a Wagner in his hurricane *Walküre* or his dark-toned *Parsifal*.

It is this peculiar and to me unique property of *sound*, which seems to mark out music from all other forms of art—that is to say, from all other forms of communication between God and Man. It is the one art which, though each man and woman hears and interprets in his or her own way, is open to all—or shall we say open to an infinitely greater degree to the less evolved of the human species than any other art? Great painting; great writing; even that most neglected of arts in our day, almost a forgotten art, great speaking—all demand a certain sophistication and understanding by the audience. Not so, great music.

It seems to me that the reason for this is that music appeals in particular to that new sixth, or psychic sense which Man is developing to a definite recognition as an extra sense—perhaps the most important one of

all. For it is the sense which is gradually making us aware of the reality of the Worlds Invisible.

When we speak of “the music of the spheres”, we really mean that music is the Voice of God—and in a sense quite peculiar to itself. God has a thousand voices—but His music is the Voice Indirect. It is the voice of symbol. It conjures up within all of us, whatever our intellectual or spiritual power, visions of that “city out of sight, whose builder and maker is God”—visions of what we feel, even the humblest of us, we were intended to be, and of the invisible kingdom to which we are the heirs.

Through this “Voice of God”, we learn our lessons of other-worldliness so subtly, that we are not only unaware of our learning, but any one of us, however undeveloped, can understand them. *We learn through emotion.*

Let no woman and no man be ashamed of emotion—for it is God’s way. So degraded have we become that we are ashamed of our emotions. Upon what is often a certain starveling “restraint” rather than the reticence which gives concentration and strength, we place a premium in our day in the novel, the poem, or the symphony. It is for the novelist who, having nothing to say, yet “says it well”; the poet of precociousness who is merely precocious; and for some of the musicians of the “futurist” schools, who are at times so “elusive”—that other much prized quality—that they have managed to elude both harmony and rhythm, we reserve our rarest commendations, especially when we don’t understand their writing or their music. For the publicists who “pontifically prose portentous platitude”, we reserve the adjective “serious”, when they are merely silly and shallow, much as a generation or two ago, before they had ceased to matter, men and

women listened with bated breath to the platitudinarians of our pulpits. Emotionalism was “bad form” whether in the public school, the press, or the pulpit—with the inevitable result that the public took it out in another way by running riot in a saccharine sentimentalism which inhibited thought in parliament, newspaper, and especially in the music which has dominated our world for the last twenty years. That is to say, with the unadulterated slush of cheap jazz set to words which would make us blush were we not sentiment-sodden, sung by moronic young men, looking like gangsters, and with the voices of sickly girls, their passions as promiscuous and anæmic as their voices.

And all this, in music as in other things, has resulted from our inhibition of the emotional, the difference between which and the sentimentalism which is its bastard imitation, is that between diamond and paste. So do we pay for the intellectual suppression of emotion—that is of true “feeling”, the thing which can lead to every kind of vice of heart and brain.

Man will recapture his God when he recaptures his emotions—but emotions that have been sublimated from the cruder manifestations of the Emotional Age of the pagan world which divorced beauty from pity, to feelings which are at once spiritualised and *conscious*.

We “learn through emotion”. The ecstasy which even the ordinary man can feel when he loses himself within the glory evoked from their orchestras by a Stokowski or a Beecham or a Toscanini is more than emotion—it is intellectual-emotion. No man who has lost himself in the rhapsody of a Liszt or the polonaise or waltz of a Chopin—in the *timbre* of a McCormack or the animal passion of a Caruso is ever again the *same* man. And after Richard Wagner had flung his tone-poems to a mocking world, that world, although it did

not know it, was never to be the same again. It was changed not only sensuously but spiritually—not only interpretatively but intellectually.

Our Friend, as He educates us, can do so, at least objectively, only through form and sound—through that *sound* which has *form*—the difference between Music and Noise.

Once, again, “we have got into a muddle about God”, whom we insist shall be unhuman. We can imagine His almighty hand in the hymn, the psalm or the symphony—our starved imagining can even stretch itself to thinking of Him behind the National Anthems of the world—for we have yet to realise that God is international!—but we boggle at such recognition in the music-hall song, the waltz or the foxtrot!

I believe that not only is God the conductor of what we call the “great music” but that His hand is to be found equally in “The Blue Rhapsody” of a Gershwin or the negro spirituals of a Paul Robeson. That His hand does not lose its cunning when it is directing the music of a Russian ballet or the feet of the African sand-dance.

Let nobody divorce their Friend from the joy of dancing on a good floor to the subtler rhythm and orchestration which is the contribution of jazz to music, any more than from the fingers of the organist when he builds up a Bach fugue beneath the reverberating arches of a great cathedral.

For our Friend is not only in the whirlwind but in the gentle breeze—in the brassy sun and in the silver of the moonlight—in the brow of the philosopher and in the subtle curve of the adoleseing girl. He is in the biceps of the boxer and in the bosom of the mother, and in the sweetness of the child at her breast, as in the sleuth of the wrestler. He speaks to us through the

caricature as in the stained glass of the saint; through the humour of a Dickens as in the fantastic world-vision of a Wells; through the organ of the cathedral as in the drum-beat of Africa.

He is with the house-mother as she washes up the things (however difficult it may sometimes be to realise it!); with the statesman in his parliament; with the woman of virtue as she watches over her husband and children as with the poor woman of the town that walks in the street outside; with the Pavlova or Karsavina or Tortajada as they cunningly blend music and symbol as with the poorest chorus girl who, to the beat of cheap orchestra, shakes a flippant toe starward!

It is not that I would say there is nothing evil in the greatest of all arts—the art of living, of which Music is perhaps the vital stuff. There is bad art. There is much that passes for art which is no art at all—and especially amongst artists and those strange denizens of No Man’s Land, the critics, who, however, so often do, nearly impossible as it is, a thankless task so conscientiously and so well. All this is true.

But though all this be true, I am only trying to show that nothing is ever wasted—not even bad art. And though bad art must be discouraged and not, as men have always done, encouraged, yet better some art than no art at all. The man or woman who hears the raucous appeal of the bad novel or bad play may one day discern the pregnancies of the good novel and the good play. The man who finds beauty in the animal blatancies of low-vibrationed jazz may one day find it in high-vibrationed syncopated melody, or catch the shining whisper of a Mozart or a Beethoven. The man who hears God underground may one day hear Him under the silvery moon or in the light and air of heaven.

I may go farther. The woman of the house may wash her dishes to the glory of God and find her menial work as acceptable in His sight as the magic wavings of the baton of a Savonoff or a Henry Wood. The juggler who was found juggling before the high altar in the church of Notre Dame and who protested that he was juggling to the glory of the Mother of God, it being the only gift he had to offer her, was unconsciously telling the world one of the deeper truths.

The great Kreisler in speaking with a friend of mine said to her: “We violinists should not always be thinking of our place under the stars. We should think, rather, of what we have to offer to the world, and in the offering remember that every single one of us has a quality peculiar to himself. I have often listened with pleasure to a quite ordinary violinist of no special gifts who perhaps has told me something which could not be told to me by the finest *virtuoso*. We all of us in music have our own special contribution to offer, whether we stand low or high upon the ladder of what the world calls fame.”

If this generous fiddler said these words, he also was putting forward what I am here trying, however imperfectly, to express.

There is one glory of the sun and another of the moon and yet another of the stars. Everything—everything has its uses in this school of ours which carries us on from course to course and from class to class, always with us our Friend, for whom nothing is too small, nothing too great. That Friend who, Himself the supreme Artist, speaks to us with love and that wisdom which itself is love and understanding combined, through the artist of word, of colour, and above all of sound.

For Beauty and Love are one.

XIII

GOD AND THE CHURCHES

You sought to bind Me in your mortared stones—
And in the binding called me free,
You bound Me in your dogmas, creeds and tomes—
The mortal binding immortality.
But now once more I stand abandoned, lone,
Fleeing from out the griping bursting stone
To leave your altars cold and so depart
To find new altars in the human heart.

HAVING considered our Eternal Friend in what one may call His "human" relationships, we find ourselves naturally faced with His relation to those who profess to be His special interpreters on earth—the Priests and the Churches.

Where does this new and "human" concept of God the Friend stand in regard to the Churches?

It is this part of our consideration of and search for "God", the meaning of which originally was "Spirit", which will raise many difficulties and objections. Many who have followed so far with sympathy and understanding will perhaps be inclined to abandon this consideration of a "human" God.

They will do so because of one little but notorious weakness of most human beings—the desire to have an omnipotent God so far removed from all "human" considerations as to be nearly "inhuman", labelled with dogmas the indictment of which has always aroused in man, and especially woman, his and her most pitiless passions.

When, however, I say that here there is and can be no attack upon any church or form of faith as such, seeing that as I have all along contended, there are

millions of paths to and millions of concepts of the Godhead, much of possible hostility will be avoided.

Indeed, the faith of every man and woman must be respected in any consideration of Him who is Father to us all, it being realised that every Church and every individual in every Church has some fraction of truth unknown to anybody else in the world.

Long years ago, a Buddhist, a Parsee, a Christian and a Chinese Confucian met in a remote part of India. The Chinese sage asked each one in turn: "And may I ask, sir, what is *your* beautiful religion?" To him all religions had their special beauty, and it is in this spirit that we here consider God's relations to the Churches.

All Churches and all faiths are steps on the Path leading out of Time into Eternity. Even their dogmas are crutches to help us along that road—dogmas to be discarded when with them we have finished. Whilst I believe that in their ultimate sense God has no use for either dogma or theology, I believe He uses these artificial supports of Faith as He uses the experiences of sin or suffering—to help man along the roads of life and death.

We cannot blame the cripple for using his crutches. We can only do so if, after having recovered the use of his limbs, he continues to use them.

I believe that all Churches, from the great "State Nationals" down to the "Wee Frees" and "Auld Lichts" of life, have their saints and their own wisdom. I believe that they all have their earnest souls, though souls often struggling under the gyves of priest and dogma. And I believe with all my heart and soul that sooner or later such souls find "the greater freedom" which Jesus promised to all those who were sincere in their search for truth. God has all eternity in which to work.

But I think that what may be said about the generally confessed extraordinary failure in our day of so many of the Churches either to identify themselves with the lives of the people, to secure their confidence, or to solve their problems, is that, all unconsciously, priest and Church have sometimes come between God the Lover and Man the Beloved. Much as we have seen, in education, the professor and pundit so often, though unintentionally, obscuring the light from the pupil, and instead of concentrating upon the understanding of “life and living” losing themselves and their pupils in “examinations” and “facts”.

It seems to me that it is this very “separation from life” and its replacement by concentration upon dogma and form which is at the root of the failure of the Churches, some of whom have exchanged “life” and “thought” for “organisation” and “success”—a “success” which, in our day, has ended in failure. It is still true that “he that saveth his life will lose it”. If our Churches are to recapture the ears and thoughts of the people, I think they will first have to recapture that “first fine careless rapture” of the Early Church, when the love of God and of Jesus ran like a flame across the hearts of men and women.

And it is only fair to say that the finest and most vital spirits in those churches realise this to-day, when men are feeling that the theologian and the giant organisation he has built about him like a sepulchre, has come between Jesus and His simple Message and between God the Friend and us poor humans. And it is because of this realisation that in our day we see so many new “movements” inside the Churches for the purpose of restoring that lovely vital spirit of the earlier Christian communities.

Some of these critics and friends inside their Churches

even go so far as to contend that the original message of the Lover of Mankind has been not only in its principle but especially in its practice completely metamorphosed. Such friendly critics point out in their church journals as in the columns of the daily press that Jesus the Man of Sorrows, although He would of course have men and women come together for prayer and praise in some form of "church", never contemplated the selling out to place and power of some of our State institutionalised religions. They say that He came especially to the poor and needy; that He hated pride of place and money; and that He taught just one "doctrine"—that of Love, which was no doctrine but in His own life and death, glorious practice.

However far we think there may be some basis for this view as expressed from inside the Churches, I feel we shall neither be "judging" nor exaggerating if we say that, reading His own direct words in the New Testament, Jesus never contemplated that pomp and ceremony should usurp the place of "faith" and love. Nor does one feel that it is to ceremony and the beauty of pageantry in their own place that Jesus, the Artist, would have objected, but to their *usurpation* of faith and love.

At any rate, all this can easily be seen by reading the simple loveliness of the New Testament teachings and comparing them with what many feel, rightly or wrongly, to be the often involved and difficult messages given out Sunday by Sunday from pulpits in which the occupant speaks without passion or conviction to dying audiences and from altars upon which the flame of life is being stifled under the cold, grey douche of dogma.

Having said which and leaving unsaid much more that might perhaps be advanced in gentle criticism, and always holding as sacred the right of each man to think

along his own lines and to have his own God-concept, we must hold even for such teachers and teachings not only tolerance but at times admiration. For sincerity, even when wrongheaded and wrongminded, must always command our admiration, and if there be one thing more assured than another, it is that these theologic dogmatists are as sincere in their teachings as are their critics.

For Jesus did not only come to succour the poor and needy, the humble and meek, He came also to succour those who sit in high places, to save the high-stomached Caiphases who give Him lip-service whilst unconsciously crucifying Him, as well as the simple humble lover of Christ.

The Torquemadas of the past used the rack and the faggot “to save men’s souls”, with a full fatuous belief that by such means they were serving the gentle Jesus and His loving Father. For there are no bounds to the theologian’s warping of the simple things.

The Great Teacher comes, gives His message in purity, and is finally crucified by His own! only, as the centuries roll on, and as we have seen in the World-War, to have His name invoked by the warmakers and the Pharisees in support of the very things He abhorred.

XIV

THE GOD OF DOGMA

The Blinded God sits fastened to his rock,
Upon the broody head the waters crash,
The iron brow, unyielding, takes the shock,
Above, about him plays the lightning flash—
Remote, dream-sunken, stares the stony Face,
Within its dogmas and its creeds immersed,
He crouches lowering on his ancient base,
Dreaming old dreams, the God of Safety First—
Hears not the thunders of the coming storm,
Sees not the waters where he sits alone,
That beat in vain upon the massy form—
The Blinded God fast-rooted in the stone.

(The God under the Zambesi Falls.)

REMEMBERING all these things in our consideration of the relationship of God and the Churches, and the fact that Man still makes God in His own image, we now proceed to an examination of the Idea of God as it is conceived by, broadly speaking, the two chief groups of the Christian Church throughout the world. That is to say, first, by those Churches which, however, differing between themselves, regard their God as the God of Dogma, with His relationship to Man rigidly set out and defined by creeds; or, secondly, by other Churches, "protestant" against the Dogma Churches, which, also differing violently amongst themselves, regard each man as having the right to his own individual interpretation of his Maker . . . within, however, certain boundaries.

The first of these concepts I am calling "The God of Dogma". The other, "The 'Liberal' God".

The first is, in its essence and despite its protests, the old Jehovah-concept of the Old Testament. The

other, the Jehovah-concept modified by the New Testament and by modern thought.

“The God of Dogma”, or the Jehovah-God, is the most immutable, indeed implacable, of all the Christian Gods. We are first considering this Jehovah-God, because of all the concepts of God remaining, He is the most powerful, and is, indeed, perhaps the only one whose power is increasing, not decreasing.

We are living in a day in which, as so many believe, the Holy Spirit of the God who stands behind all forms and concepts and dogmas and all churches and creeds, is fluttering around new altars and finding a resting-place in new temples—“temples not made with hands”, but in the poor human heart. In the break-up in our day of Organised Religion, there are streaming to this Jehovah-God of dogma, tens of thousands of poor, broken, or merely disgruntled souls, who come out of the “liberal” Churches, tiring of free choice and seeking bed-rock dogma for the soles of their halting feet.

It is indeed one of the stranger church-phenomena of our day that the Churches of the Jehovah-God go forward only in those countries where the “liberal” Churches, who challenged Him, once had their fastness. This is to be seen, as regards their most powerful exemplar, in such countries as England, Germany, the United States and Holland. It is in the countries where once the Jehovah-God seemed set dogmatically and for ever that His Churches are going back—as, for example, in Mexico and Spain, where He is doing battle not so much with the “liberal free-choice” God as with the Rationalist and Atheist gods—for even the rationalist and atheist have their own didactic gods and their own dogmas, usurping, as they have, the place of the theologian!

These stragglers from the "liberal" Churches, or "converts", call them what you will, despite all their inchoateness may be classified, I think, into certain more or less defined types.

These types vary enormously as regards intellectual and spiritual equipment. They come from all classes. But one thing they have in common—a deep sincerity and as deep a sorrow.

In reviewing them, we should do so in a spirit of understanding. We may differ from them—but at least they and we are of the stuff of a common humanity. Nor is it difficult, I think, to probe their hearts and to comprehend their motives and the springs of their action.

For behind these motives, however warped, be sure God the Friend is waiting to reveal Himself as these devotees are able to bear it. They are His children as are those who do not agree with them.

In classifying such converts, we have to remember that the overmastering need of *all* men is for some religion and nearly, though not always, for some *God*. This is as true of the Atheist with his "God of Reason" as of the Christian, of the Buddhist as of the Confucian. The particular form in which they find that God is not for us to decry. Each man must find his own God in his own way.

We have then to remember that next to the most general and deepest of all human instincts—the instinct to God, Man, especially in his more primitive stages, desires an assured Divinity, one who is *absolute*. Man's God must be a God who is never wrong and who speaks without equivocation, telling him exactly what to do and how and when to do it. Any sign of weakness in his God means an abrogation of Godship, because it means, though he knows it not, the abrogation of the godship he feels in the secret places of his heart to be within himself.

In a word, we all want the strait-jacket of dogma. Only when our spiritual backbones are strong enough can we walk without it.

So we find that, considering them generally, behind every type of convert to the Jehovah-God there lies this strongest of human appeals—the appeal of the dogma that is at once irrevocable and eternal.

It is because men and women are “tired of thinking for themselves”, tiring in fact of the very stuff of evolution, that they throw themselves upon the bosom of the Jehovah-God and upon His priests, who say: “We will do your thinking for you. We cannot think wrong. Ours is the only True Church!”

Unlike any other Christian Church, apart at least from the more fanatical ill-considered shoots of nonconformity of the type of the “Wee Frees” and the Plymouth Brethren, the Church of the God of Dogma stands alone in this claim to infallibility and to being the *only true* God. He is also the only God who lays down for His children through his priests and church the absolute ordering of their lives and beliefs in “Faith and Morals”.

That is to say, the ordering of *all* their lives, for in practice, “faith and morals” will be found, in the case of the major Church of this group, to cover every department of human life from birth to death. The priest is at the side of the mother upon the birth of her child as he trembles on the razor edge of life. He is at his side as he totters on the edge of death and eternity. As for politics, his church has been seeking through the centuries to capture “the temporal power”.

In our consideration of the Jehovah-God and the Jehovah-Churches, we shall try in all sincerity and decency to be fair to them, as, later, we shall hope to be to the “non-dogmatic” God and congregations of

the "liberal" or "protesting" churches, as I have called that group which gives free-choice to the individual—always within certain limitations—to find his own way to and his own interpretation of God. For it is essential that we shall be specially jealous for what we conceive to be Truth when we examine those "Ideas of Gods" which are farthest from our own thoughts as they are far from the concept set out in these pages of God the Friend and Comrade. And we shall try never to forget that we are all brothers and sisters, comrades of a common humanity, and that love and not hate is the road to sympathy and understanding.

All this is one reason why one must freely acknowledge the often genuinely fine democracy and entire absence of sanctimoniousness, accompanied by a psychological, if not always spiritual, understanding of sin and the sinner, which characterises the Jehovah-Churches and which help to account for the extraordinary popularity of their major unit. The Confessional alone with its weekly power to purge away all sin at a word, and to afford the confessed a "fresh start", gives this particular church a "pull" over the non-confessing churches that is not to be estimated. The Jehovah-Church says, in effect, to the sinner: "Sin if you must, though it is wrong to sin—but place all your sins upon us, the priests—that is our job."

The Jehovah-Church, of whatever branch, understands the sinner as no other, for as no other church it understands the self-indulgent sides of human nature. "To sin is human—to forgive, divine!" is its slogan. It does not tell the sinner to sin, as has so often been erroneously alleged by the rival "protesting churches". Indeed, it expressly excludes from absolution any sinner who at the moment of confession is contemplating any other sin.

True that in practice, as those with even less knowledge of human nature than “Holy Church” also know, all this works out in “a clean slate and free to sin again”. It was quite in another way that Jesus the Christ understood the sinner and his sin. He met it, not with vicarious priestly “forgiveness”, but with the *understanding* that is itself love.

It is this certainty and “assuredness” of the here and hereafter which attracts every type that comes to this mediævalist survival of the Jehovah-Jah of the Jews. “I—I am I,” he says. “Fear me! Love me you *must*! Trust in my priests and theologians. Lay everything on them. Let them do your thinking—and you will be safe here and hereafter!” He is the God of “Safety First”.

How vitally different was the Jesus-Idea of God! that God who, through Him, told us not to be afraid. Who told us to work out our own salvation and to find our own path—and insisted over and over again that our only path to Him was the love-path. That love which cannot be compelled.

In our human weakness, we all of us like to have a “cinch on Satan”—and, indeed, for that matter, a cinch on our gods—and for them to have a cinch on us—for it saves thinking. Of such is the Jehovah-God who works through fetish and fear.

Of our types of Jehovah-converts to dogma implacable, we have first of all the great broad Mass, who, comparatively ignorant—and which one of us is not ignorant!—all unknowing of other God-concepts, under the universal instinct to God and Religion, find themselves naturally and inevitably at the feet of a God who claims through his priests absolute and unique inspiration and certainty. Still more easily upon the broad maternal bosom of His Mother—that

stroke of religious genius of the greatest of the Jehovah-Churches. Upon this Rock of Ages, they cling limpet-like. Seldom, indeed, in this life of ours are they dislodged.

And, indeed, which devotee of them all, fetish-held, would be so foolish as to sacrifice the chance of a seat in glory and safety from the fires of a church-conjured hell, on the off-chance that one of the "protesting" churches was right? Yet because Man, and especially Woman, cling to their chains, I am persuaded that even if the fear-element were eliminated from the teachings of the Jehovah-Churches, they would lose few of their clients—whether converts or born within the fold—such being the passion of Man, and especially of Woman, to strait-jacket their God into the "One True Religion".

Next in our types of the feeders of this Jehovah-God, are the disappointed and disgruntled ones of the ordinary "protesting" churches, particularly of the "State" churches of countries which still profess "free-choice" for the individual. These disgruntled ones, feeling, and, as it must seem to the unbiased observer, perhaps rightly, that the "protesting" Church itself no longer has any message or indeed any "faith" as a Church, and having largely ceased to believe in much of that which it teaches, are in our day, as rebels to their Church, inclined to walk out from that Church into "The One True Church" round the corner, to exchange uncertainty for certainty, emptiness for faith, and indifference for conviction.

Now of this it may at once be said that to feel wholehearted belief in something is in itself good—even if that something be itself not altogether good.

And it must here be admitted that in some of these “Dogma” Churches there is much that is both beautiful and good—often a fine democracy denied to the “Protesting” or “Reformed” Churches and a burning zeal which welds work to faith—even though it also seal up the criticism which is the fount of all progress.

If the step into the Jehovah-Church were always a step upwards, or the preliminary to further progress, it would in itself be good. Unhappily, nearly always, because of the reason which makes the convert take that step—one rather of disgruntlement and impatience than pure thought—it is a step into the static, in which the pilgrim may find himself entombed for the remainder of his life—and even after!

It is true that in our day large numbers of these disheartened recalcitrants of the non-dogmatic Churches do not “walk into the One True Church round the corner”, or, better still, find their own church in the temple of their own mind and heart, but go out into the highways and byways of negation, never again to think about “religion”. And of such it may be said that sometimes their last state is worse than their first—for this they do not through conviction, but through disappointment and through selfishness and sloth. A blind alley which leads nowhere.

For, the only person once more with whom even the Power Behind Life can do nothing is “The Man standing in the Middle Way”. Easier to work on active evil than negative “good”. For the passion behind evil, still, is force, and as has before been said, force is always capable of transformation, whereas immobility can only be transformed into one thing—mobility. But with the Mr. and Mrs. Indifferents of whom our world is largely composed, and

who lie leaden upon the living ones, there is nothing to do.

Next in our army of converts to the major church of Dogma come the Mediævalists, still with the mind of the Dark Ages, who are so often intellectuals—but, always, theologians—often fine spirits of the type of Newman, held in the strait-waistcoats of their own intellectual subtlety. Of that type, it seems to many, were the Pharisees and Intellectuals, who persistently refused to understand Jesus's simple message of love. "Easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom," He said. But easier still for the rich than for the pure intellectual to find his way where only the child of faith and love can find it—the way that leads to the feet of the Master.

There are men, but few women, born with this instinct to theology—for the Woman's instinct is the instinct to worship, not to argue—another thing altogether. Of such are the Newmans and the Torquemadas. Sometimes loving men themselves, they are to be won neither by love nor reason—for who can reason with what to them is "the One True God of Dogma—Implacable"? Such fall into the lap of the God Absolute as naturally as a child into its mother's—their Mother, the Holy Church.

But these men are scarcely to be termed "converts". Even though originally nominally within that "Protesting" body of which they hate the name, they are already followers of the implacable God of Dogma, many of them, before entering his chief Church, regarding the head of that church as their head, and only denying to him one little thing—infallibility!

True it is that this chief of the Dogmatic Churches, and strangely enough to the outsider but not to the

insider, regards such aspirants with contempt and visits them with anathema . . . until they take the plunge into the bosom of the “One True”. All this, despite those Malines (I had nearly written “malign”!) Conversations between these two branches of the Church Dogmatic. Nor are these flirtatious mediævalists regarded by the Hierarchy of the Chief Jehovah-Church as being only “in schism”, a concession accorded, I believe, to certain Eastern Jehovah churches who refuse to admit the infallibility of the “Holy Father”, but as downright heretical.

For these would-be converts, the Sanctum sanctorum of the One True Faith, as the chief Jehovah-Church calls itself, reserves, indeed, its deepest scorn—this for a reason which it perhaps scarcely realises. This is because the buoyancy and airworthiness of the balloon of the “One True Faith” depends upon its unpuncturability, and the “infallibility” pinprick of the mediævalist hanger-on is far more menacing to its “completeness” than the direct assaults of the heathen—that is to say, of the Non-Dogmatic Churches—who can more easily be fought. That all these “hangers-on” will, before many generations, all be inside the Jehovah-Mother-Church, as the hierarchs of that Church well know, does not blunt the edge of their present hostility.

“Papal infallibility”, the fly in the ointment of these “aspirants”, is the gnat which they refuse to swallow in order to become reunited with their beloved Mother-Church—a gnat at which they strain—sometimes for human, sometimes for dogmatic reasons.

I set down these things here in my consideration of the converts to the Jehovah-God concept, because they are an essential part of our understanding of such converts. But what are all these “isms” of the priestly

mind to the average man and woman who yearn for a friendly "human" God, who is divine because He is human? They are as meaningless as they would be to Jesus Himself, who never stressed two things—one theology, the other, sin.

XV

THE ARTIST AND DOGMA

"Oh for a dose of faith to dull the pain of thought!"

An army with banners	Flaunting its colours
Out into the night	The Cross held on high
Goes forth to the battle	<i>"In this sign shall we conquer!"</i>
To make its last fight	<i>"In this sign shall we die!"</i>
Dreaming of conquest	The sun now slow-setting
Of victories it's won	On the crimson and blue
With bell, book and candle	As the army with banners
Into setting of sun	Moves to its Waterloo—
On its croziers and banners	That never forgets
Sulks the blue and the gold	And never remembers
As hooded and cowed	<i>The Old Guard it dies—</i>
It fights for the Old	<i>But it never surrenders!</i>

THERE is yet another body of converts of special importance because of their leading rôles—the artist-intellectuals who, themselves with no love for theology or hair-splitting, for quite other reasons often fall into the trap of the God of Dogma.

In our day, we often hear of a prominent writer or musician, painter or poet "going over".

Of those who have done this, and done it I am assured in absolute sincerity, and under stress of deep feeling, I believe that the hidden contributing cause, more than ever in their case, is the human desire to have peace and certainty. And that nearly as deep desire to be freed from the trouble of "thinking out things for oneself", in the case of men whose lives are essentially compounded of thought and discussion.

For it is the artist who, more than any other, needing mental peace in order to free his own creative gifts, will do anything short of selling his soul—even though, in

doing so, all unknowing, he conclude the Bargain Diabolic.

He thinks, as convert to the church which saves all questioning, that he has purchased "freedom". All he has purchased, so to speak, is "£2 a week for life and lost a limb in exchange!" Often he makes this discovery when it is too late—not daring to admit that discovery to himself, and persuading himself that life maimed is life normal.

Such safety-valves for the passion and difficulty of thought are human and natural. Let no man sneer at them.

What the average man does not realise is that no human soul is so terrorised by the religious emotion as the artist-intellectual. Because of his sensitiveness, of his capacity to see so many facets to each question, he is torn by doubt as is no other. No man sleeps so uneasily as the man who has imagination for his bedfellow!

The writer or musician, for example, dazed by his many-sided view of the thing that is the most many-sided thing of all—God Himself, terrified by doubts, torn by fears, often at the end, despairing, flings himself on to the bosom of Mother-Church and so finds relief from pain.

Scores of writers, and great interpretative and creative musicians, and even philosophers, have done that in the past and will do so again. That they purchase their surcease from pain and the painful thought at the cost of suppressing all the questioning which is the very pulse of progress in the Idea of God, and that for them repeated doses of blind "faith" are necessary to induce the anæsthesia which alone can keep them quiet, if not always easy in mind, to them, after a while, means little. To tell the anæsthetised patient in the operating-theatre that the knife at that very moment is entering

the secret places of his body, in the case of the convert of his very heart, is to tell him nothing. He is unaware.

What, however, is so strange and encouraging is that of the men and women who are leading the world's thought as artist-philosophers, such a tiny minority has surrendered the birth-pains of thinking for the twilight sleep of Orthodoxy and Dogma. And this, I think, holds true of the artist-thinkers of every country in the world.

There is one other thing which draws these fine souls to the God of Dogma, and that is the artistry of that God.

The Jehovah-God is often an artist—His chief drama the symbol of the Mass. Repelled by the grey negation of the “protesting” God, seated often in ugly tabernacles with his rejection of symbol and of symbol's instrument, ceremony, how natural is it not for the artist to seek solace for his artistry upon altars whose ceremonial beauty is the subtlest and most universal of all appeals not only to those souls still in the childhood of the race but to the older and deeper!

Behind it all, that other universal appeal of an aristocratic democracy. For in the Church of the God of Dogma, with its spiritual standardisation, all are equal. No man or woman is ever turned away from its doors upon the score of poverty or sin. The door of the sanctuary, unlike those closed doors of the “liberal” non-dogmatic churches, only “open on Sundays”, is, for the weary ones of life, always ajar.

But let us make no mistake, despite much that is beautiful and appealing in this God of Fear and Blind Obedience, the Jehovah-God is essentially the Judge.

From His rulings there is no appeal. He is still the Ancient of Days who commanded the Chosen People to smite their enemies hip and thigh, and sometimes in His name to murder women and little children. He is still the God of the Old Testament—not the God of Love of the New.

His is the hell of antiquity. His also the starry patriarchal heaven, with its saints seated in inexorable swathes, rank on rank, of the same ordered iron of the Jehovah-hierarchy who are at once the Jehovah's representatives and executioners on earth.

Nevertheless, though He boast that He is still the Ancient of Days, *semper idem*, whose teachings and dogmas through the ages have never changed, they are changing. Yet does He hold to the essentials. It is the form of presentation of those essentials which in our day is subtly changing—something which is the beginning of the end and leading by gradual inevitableness to their ultimate abandonment.

For the Jehovah of Dogma, unlike his Terrible Prototype of the Wandering in the Wilderness, is becoming accommodately elastic. The hell of fire and brimstone for the Great Average, in our day when even orthodoxy has to keep up with the times, has for the aristocratic convert become a hell only of spirit. The subtle flattery of the Intellectual, that "he is quite different from the Mob and of course needs a different presentment", is resistless. And always, for the devotee, there is a little back door by which he may escape at once from his sins and his doubts.

When, indeed, an eternal hell, the consignment to or the avoidance of which is made to depend upon a fleeting life-span of seventy years, becomes too much for the reason and for the nerves, the priests of the Jehovah-God say: "We do not know that there is anybody in

hell except Judas Iscariot”—so making Judas the scapegoat for the possible immunity of the rest of the race! And when the Great Average, awestruck, asks the Jehovah-Jah how, according to the teaching of those same priests, Jesus could ever have been brought to the Cross to die for the sins of men if Judas had not first done his faithless work? the answer comes, inexorable: “Don’t ask questions. I am not the God of answer but of statement. You must have faith!”

That this “faith” in its turn means for every son and daughter of earth a different thing means nothing—once more comes the dogma inexorable: “You must have faith—*my* Faith.”

Already, however, the Jehovah-God who, like the balloon, depends for His buoyancy and His very existence upon his unpuncturable nature, is beginning to sag. For already He is having to compromise.

He has had to compromise about hell as we have seen, much as He had to compromise upon the admission of the earth going round the sun, which once He denied. He is having to make terms with the Science which He secretly hates. And now He, the Male God Supreme, is having to compromise with Woman, his arch enemy—that Woman who, in the way of paradox that is life, is fast becoming His last refuge.

The once impenetrable fortress of the Jehovah-Dogma is yielding the substance of its stones, not to direct assault by catapult, but to the erosion of Time—and the thing of which Time is the working tool—evolution.

For now, in the hour of seeming success, the fortress of the Jehovah-Churches trembles upon its dogmas. Drawing its last supporters out of the break-up of the churches of the other gods, it has everything against it.

It has not only "Science", but something more deadly and inimical than Science, it has the New Religion, informed equally by science and faith, that is showing itself—a Religion founded upon Reason and Faith—the heavenly twins—a faith that offers demonstration instead of blind belief.

And as the Major Church of the God of Dogma takes up its positions for the Waterloo which is the fate of all churches when they lose their hold upon simple teachings and upon love, let those who only remember the cruelties of its Inquisitions, the terror of its hells, and its un-reason, not forget to remember also the glories of this army—terrible as an army with banners—of its splendid democracy and its good works among the poor and wretched. Let them not forget as they watch the sulky beauty of those banners of blue and gold, flaunted with crimson, as hooded and cowed it passes to its last battle—of the Saint Francis d'Assisi and Jeannes d'Arc and Father Damiens who marched in its ranks, nor let us forget that if it organised Jesus the Lover and God the Friend out of the Church, it did so unwitting and with a sincerity that was as appealing as it was appalling.

The Army with Banners marches past into the gathering gloom, carrying with it a terrible-wonderful memory.

"The Old Guard dies, but it never surrenders!"

THE "LIBERAL" GOD

Not his the chartless land of cloudy dream,
Not his the rooted Ancient Rock of Days,
As Blondin-like, he treads the happy mean,
Above the frenzied Faith—the Safer Ways,
'Twixt Scylla and Charybdis' yea and nay,
His balance-pole in careful poise—ah well!
He holds himself unto the Middle Way,
One eye on heaven—the other eye on hell.

WHEN we turn from Jehovah in his most dogmatic terrible form to what may be called the Liberal God, or God of Free Choice, who does permit to His aspirants a certain amount of free-will in their interpretation of him, we cannot do better than look at him, not through our own eyes, but through the eyes of that increasing number of his adherents who in our day feel so troubled about his passing.

They tell us, as does the Press, that his tabernacles are empty or emptying. Others say that he is no longer the "protesting" or "protestant" God, having more or less ceased to actively protest against the Jehovah of Dogma of whom we have been writing, the protest against whom was, indeed, his original *raison d'être*. Others, again, insist that his priests have in many cases ceased to have any fervent or indeed real belief in the things they teach. They even state that they view with a certain pathetic equanimity the dispersal of their flocks either to "The Ancient of Days" of which I have been writing, or into the wilderness of doubt and negation, or, to those "temples not made with hands" in which, instead of church, so many in our day are finding "God the Friend".

In their despair and difficulty, these anxious adherents of a God who in his day did justify his existence by protest against the dogma and high-stomached pride of the Jehovah concept, can win from us nothing but sympathy and understanding. It is not for those of us who have found God to be real and a religion that is life itself, to sneer or to condemn. The wise man never condemns.

But though we may not condemn, we may criticise. Condemnation is not helpful. Criticism is.

It is asserted by these critics of their own churches that so far as "the Church by Law Established" is concerned which itself forms the "state, official interpretation of the Godhead", some of the spiritual heads are themselves uncertain of their mission—or, indeed, of any mission. They contend that they are players at Church politics—everlasting compromisers of polemic, concerned primarily for the "success" of their churches or institutions rather than for living issues.

Now, some of these statements may be exaggerations, but I do not think they are all exaggerations. In this case, at least, one thinks there is fire as well as smoke.

The members of these "established" churches who themselves are critics of those who sit in the seats of the mighty seem to feel that in our day these "mighty ones" are as divorced from their congregations, even from their own younger clergy, as they are from life as it is lived, as indeed certain of these more enlightened Elder Brethren have been telling their own Church convocations—though to all this there may be and doubtless are exceptions. Micawber-like, these hierarchs are always "waiting for something to turn up", and, as in the case of their prototype, nothing ever

does “turn up”. The only thing that can “turn up” in a Church of God is the Spirit of God. But this Spirit never does so without invitation.

Such “rebels”, the more effective that they themselves are often the most devoted members of the churches they criticise, insist that the Church Heads are without conviction—without that fine passion for souls of the Primitive Church, which, whatever its faults, and they were many, at least *felt*. Without feeling, there can be no religion—for, once more, feeling is *life*.

Unlike their great, gentle, but dynamic leader, static, it is asserted that the time has come in the history of these “Free-Choice” Churches, “established” or other, when they have to ask themselves whether their teaching has not to-day become remote from the teaching two thousand years ago of a love founded upon a Spiritual Aristocracy and a Democracy of which Moscow never dreamed, instead of upon one of Blood and Bank Balance, and compounded of compromise? They say, do these critics and lovers of the “Liberal” God, that dogma and ceremony and subtle secret alliance with power and pomp has taken the place of a human love and a human God.

It is dawning upon the minds of those who want a cleansing of these churches that Jesus Himself never sat in the Seats of the Mighty—that lovely manly Jesus who has so often been degraded into a Figure of emaciation and woe.

There is a story told in Dostojevski’s *The Brothers Karamasov* of a Russian monastery to which Jesus, returning to earth in our day, sought admittance, and though recognised, the risk of being driven forth as a wrecker of the Church. One wonders how far this legend has application to-day within the ranks of the more orthodox “establishments”? Would Jesus, in His

ignoring of dogma, His contempt for place and power, His deliberate indifference to theology, and His persistent regard of the theologian as the direct enemy of love and life, be recognised to-day if He came on earth and entered one of our great cathedrals or churches?

I think He would be recognised—but in those tiny, ill-considered churches where a splendid priest works obscure amongst the poor and wretched. Whether He would be recognised within those domes where dogma is enthroned to the exclusion of "christianity" is another matter.

The recognition of this absence of fervency and sympathy in the high places of the churches, "Liberal" or "Jehovah", is, one thinks, the most common feeling in our generation amongst those who know, instinctively, that, once more to use the common phrase of our time—"all is not well with the Church". Not because its tabernacles are emptying, for it might happen that only a handful of human beings in an earth recalcitrant might hold the love of Jesus and His Father intact when all others had deserted—but that they are emptying because in those tabernacles there is no fire—no *passion*. Not for nothing do we speak of "the Passion of Christ" in a way never understood by theologians.

Which one of the Great Average, of the little ordinary people, would instinctively think of calling in upon his deathbed one of these hierarchs of the Churches to give him comfort and to hold a lantern to his feet as they stumble in the death-darkness? But which one of us would not call in that same Jesus whose name is always in the mouths of those hierarchs, could we be sure that He stood outside the door waiting to be called . . . as He does!

Here is the acid test because it is the love-test.

That there are good church leaders as well as bad, and that there are fine men and women in all churches, “Liberal” or “Dogmatic”, despite the systems they serve—who will deny? Some of them “sit in the valley of the shadow” of ignorance where we all, at one time or another in our earthly, and perhaps pre-earthly, existence have sat—that is all. One day, as their friendly critics have themselves experienced, the light will break in upon them and they will one thinks find their way on the Path, not by “institutionalised establishment,” not by the strait-jacket of dogma, not by the reiteration of formulæ which have long ceased to have meaning, but by prayer and works and faith and by the direct contact with their fellows which means life—a road so simple and obvious that, in the way that men have, they will at first seek almost any other.

That the Churches and congregations of Free Choice, which I have called “Liberal”, conformist or non-conformist, are hopelessly divided on dogma and practice, does not matter, if only because truth is always with the minority—and the majority is always wrong . . . in the end! All the Great Teachers in the beginning have been in a minority of one—crucified sometimes by the majorities set over against them. The price of all freedom, intellectual, spiritual, or personal, is the readiness to break away at any moment from the deadweight of the majority, whether in religion or politics. We must be ready, and at any moment, “to take up our beds and walk” with the eternal seeking minority.

Only, as the priest-reformer has found, in that way church “promotion” does not lie! The great reformers of life and religion, always extremists, never took this “middle way”, the reason why so many of them

from Jesus downwards died a violent death, often at the hands of the religious leaders of their time.

In one of the more rigid and dogmatic branches of "the Church by Law Established", we have, indeed, now reached the strange position that its hierarchs, as, also, its humbler clergy, would as strongly resent being called "protestant" (that is protestant against the Jehovah-God of "The Ancient of Days"), as they would at being called "traitors" to the Jehovah-Church, the very name of which they have taken for themselves, still straining though they do at the gnat of "infallibility" of the earthly head of the Jehovah-Church before their final surrender to that Church, which waits, patient, assured of that surrender. Though why they should strain at such a mite when they have already swallowed whole camels of dogma, incredible and indigestible as it seems to the instructed layman, would be for the average man astonishing—if he ever knew anything about it!

And, using the love-test in carrying a friendly criticism of the more earnest souls of the "Liberal" congregations one step farther. If one could bring together, in the name of Jesus, to send a message in His name to the world, within the circle, say, of the Albert Hall, the leaders of the churches lying to the left of the "Liberal" group, still nominally "non-conforming" to the "Establishment", and with them the warrior-chiefs of the doctrine of "Blood and Fire" as it may be called, lying still more to the left, and with them, again, the hierarchs of the Church by Law Established, some of them half in and half out of the "Ancient of Days", what would be the result?

Or what would *not* be the result!

But the Great Average, that despised and rejected of the intellectual, with all its limitations, has within it a

heaven-sent understanding of one thing. In its heart—the organ by which rather than its brain it “thinks”—it knows that if all these priests and clergymen of the “Liberal” God really did inhold the loving-kindness and toleration of the non-sectarian Jesus, their Master, they would be able to meet together anywhere and send out to the world the united message of love and service which was *the only message that Jesus of Nazareth ever came to teach.*

XVII

“FAITH” AND “PRAYER”

To every mortal man that sins
Come Faith and Prayer—the Heavenly Twins.

AT this point, where we have been considering in particular the gods of dogma who rely upon what they call “faith” to reconcile the doubter and the devotee to assertions that are so often irreconcilable with fact or experience, it may be well to clear Faith itself from all the verbiage and false interpretation within which the dogmatist has enmeshed it. Only so shall we find the pearl in the hogwash.

In anything we feel about God, “Faith” enters, that faith which Paul, the prose-poet, describes so eloquently as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”.

No word in any language has been so dragged from its original and “spiritual” meaning as “faith”, which forms with “experience” the sum total of human effort and aspiration.

Weighted with “fear”, it has been used by the Dogma Churches as a cudgel to beat poor doubting souls into the fold of the “One True”. It has been employed by every theologian who wished to deny the facts of Science when they conflicted with the particular creed of his own church. For twenty centuries it has been used by the so-called leaders of christianity to strike terror into the hearts of simple people and to bring about the surrender of the right of the free-born man to individual thinking. And, though it would not perhaps be true to say that it has never in the churches

of dogma been used in its only possible meaning, that of Jesus, it would be true to say that it has seldom been so used.

“Faith” is really “an attitude of mind”, not an “act”. It has itself literally nothing to do with belief or non-belief in *anything*, whether that be a dogma or a doubt. It is itself in direct contradiction to those who employ it in their description of their own particular sect as “*the Faith*”. Because it is exactly the opposite to that pre-judged, “mind made up” attitude of what are so often mistermmed “The Faithful”, the term also significantly employed by the two hundred millions of Islam, a word which means “resignation”, a Moslem or Mussulman being “one who has surrendered”. None of which should be permitted to obscure the many fine qualities of the Muhammedan, who in various parts of the world has often won the admiration of the rival christian.

The essential quality of the man or woman who has faith is that he or she is receptive to impression—to that inspiration which is always pouring out of the Love and Mind of God to bathe us in its life-giving rays. In a word, that he or she is “open-minded”. It is, if you will, a prayerful attitude because it is the attitude expectant, and it will always have in it the quality of “worship”—that is the tribute to spirit which inferior will for ever pay to superior and which Man and Woman instinctively pay to the Higher Powers behind life.

Man can no more live without worship than he can live without prayer—but the worship of “fear” and the useless effort to cajole the gods which through the centuries has so largely passed for “worship” should not find its place in the mind of any human beings independent of thought and mind, standing upright in

the light of day to look their God in the face as becomes free men and women who are heirs to His grace.

Faith is the very substance of life—it is, indeed, the one thing by which all men and women *live*, without which they could not, and indeed do not, as the suicide proves, have the will to persist. It is because the quality of faith is “hope”, that faith is itself so vital.

There is no single human being who, in order to keep unbroken the “silver cord” which holds him to life, does not use faith—and this, though he know it not, is as true of the ironclad materialist as of the saint or mystic, of the scientist as of the priest.

Each time the scientific investigator develops a theory, he is putting out the *antennæ* of “faith” into space hoping that they may connect with some fact which will support that theory, and, though he would be astonished and indignant to hear it, is really “praying”, for of prayer, faith is the cutting edge, and without it, becomes void and nugatory. Each time that we wake into this world of joy and tears, we make an “act of faith”—faith that life is worth living for its own sake and that evolution is its own justification.

Each time that a mother bears a child or a father helps her to conceive one, it is a joint act of faith—faith in the new and endless life of which our universe is compounded.

Our every act, good or bad, in this world from birth to death, is an act of faith.

How far other is the “act of faith” of the Jehovah-churches, which, without any basis whatever, without any proof, demand of their devotees that they “shall have faith!”—that faith the very basis of which is sweet “reasonableness!”

Every time that the facts of science clash with the

unsupported assertions of the dogmatist and the man and woman of intelligence and spirit “jibs”, as they do and will continue to do, they are told by these “blind, leaders of the blind”—that term which, applied to them, we so often meet in these days—that they must have faith! And each time that the cruel unreason of the gods of dogma who will send to the place of darkness that is limbo the child who has been unlucky enough to escape baptism is challenged by the protesting mother, the answer comes, implacable: “It is God’s will. You must have faith!”

Faith, in fact, has been used not only as a dope to reason but as the answer to the now century-old battle not between Science and Religion—but between Science and Dogma, and until dissolved by the light now pouring upon our world which is the “Light of the World”, the last stone pass from the last fortress of “the Faith”, it will so continue to be used. And when I speak of “Science”, I do not refer to that half-blinded materialist “Science”, now, it is true, fast passing, which in face of all the facts has so unscientifically shut out every phenomenon and every evidence which conflicted with its own prejudice and its own dogma that Mind and Matter are the same thing, that there is no soul, and that when the body “dies” the mind dies with it! For all of which there is not a featherweight of evidence, all the facts, whether those emerging in psychic research or in the final court of appeal of experience, being indeed exactly the other way.

In the newer better science, “faith” will play a part to-day incalculable. The scientist of the future, as indeed some scientists of highest attainment are beginning to do, will take prayer and faith into his laboratory, where passing into worlds invisible he will

find himself closer to original causes than he can ever do whilst placing himself in the strait-waistcoats of matter much as the theologian, his counterpart, has placed himself in those of creed and dogma.

When that day comes, we shall be able to “prove” our faith, that is, the sensitive attitude of mind of which I have spoken, by the sequential fact, which, in one form or another, experience teaches us *always* follows. “Faith” will then no longer ask for blind acquiescence and the doping of consciousness, but it will act as the “Open Sesame” to fairy palaces now undreamed of and to those dazzling kingdoms of spirit, the shining towers of which the Dunnes and Jeans, the Eddingtons and Lodges of our time are just glimpsing.

Through the faith that makes men free, Man is in our day about to enter his new kingdom.

But all “religion” should be capable of proof.

If you who read these words will deliberately, not by that deadweight of brute will, which sets up its own resistances, but keeping the imagination free, hold the mind open to impression, you can prove, as the writer has done in his own life, that the inspiration will sooner or later always, not sometimes come. To this phenomenon, which follows what is perhaps the fundamental law behind all the life of this planet, there is, so far as I am aware, no exception.

In a word, it is faith that brings the answer to prayer!

XVIII

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF JESUS

You taught my Little Ones to take my love in vain—
At last you crucified me in my own name.

THE average Man is a puzzled man.

He is a puzzled man—but, as he says, “he has his feelings”.

He is puzzled by the contradictions, not only between the Churches of the Jehovah-God but inside the Churches of the God of Free Choice, whom I have called the “Liberal” God.

When he is told, as he has been told, that one of the representatives of the Jehovah-God has stated that because a certain “Blood and Fire” branch of the non-conforming congregations of the “Liberal” God does not make baptism compulsory, that branch cannot be regarded as “christian”, he wonders what it was that Jesus came to teach, and whether the God who he is told endorses this, can really be anybody’s Friend? He looks about him and sees some of these often deeply sincere Christians getting so far away from the teachings of the Master whom they profess to follow that they will not even enter one another’s tabernacles and making such ceremonies as baptism and “the laying on of hands” rather than faith and conduct the test of “christianship”. All this in the name of that Master to whom, unless the whole spirit of His recorded sayings in the New Testament goes for nothing, such outward forms would mean less than nothing by the side of the giving of a cup of cold water to one of His little ones!

Our little ordinary man looks about him and sees the

churches of that same Jesus quarrelling bitterly about the interpretation of the nature of the Trinity or the Nicene or Athanasian creeds, whilst the "little ones" perish.

With growing wonder and protest he reads the *ex cathedra* pronouncement common to the two chief Jehovah and "Liberal" churches alike:

"Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith, which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, *without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.*"

The italics are my own.

No wonder he is puzzled! No wonder he begins to feel that God is a remote God without any understanding of his daily life—this little man who longs for a Father and Friend to whom he can confide all his sorrows and all his joys. No wonder he even feels that he is a dying God!

What he does not know is that the modern Christian Churches, whether they belong to the Jehovah-Dogma camp or to the freer and more liberal congregations, are sometimes worshipping a God-concept as far from the beautiful friendly concept which His greatest son, Jesus, and the last of the line of World Teachers, gave to men, as the teachings of Jesus Himself were more living and loving than those of any great teacher who had preceded Him.

The God these Churches sometimes worship, although they are unaware of it, is the fierce, implacable Jehovah-Jah concept of the Jews as they wandered in the wilderness, mingled with the gods of the Elohim of the original scripts, whether these Churches are the purely dogmatic or the less dogmatic.

They are really worshipping a God, in the irony that is life, who has no more connection with the friendly lover which Jesus preached, than that friendly lover had with dogma or indeed with much of what we call “theology”, itself so often the veil drawn by man’s vain imaginings between God and himself.

Even by the time that Saint Paul, that courageous if in many ways strait-jacketed follower of Jesus the Christ, the modern Church picture of whom he was largely the creator, was in the full fervent flow of his preaching, the simple teachings of his Master were already beginning to be lost sight of, even bowdlerised, in the strange metamorphoses of time.

We all of us know what happens to a simple tale told in a village, say of a ghost—and Jesus was the Spirit Supreme—and how after a month or a year it will assume a form so twisted from the original as to have no bearing whatever upon it.

Think, then, of how the simple love-story of Jesus was unconsciously metamorphosed within, say, the half a century after His death, which we are told by the competent scholars was the date of the earliest of any of the gospels, the authors of none of which are definitely known, as the Church dignitaries very well know, and upon which they keep silent.

Think of the unique figure of Jesus, of whose sayings and personality, however imperfectly they may at times have been misreported, and despite what are now admitted by the exegetists often to be priestly interpolations and interpretations, we do get an unforgettable and, as I believe, substantially true impression—a picture of the Great Lover—think of this unique Personality, with its single simple teaching of love . . . and then think upon the way in which even

so soon as the records of the Pauline period, this teaching had all unconsciously been worked over and changed. All this by the very churches of the time which believed themselves to be the special repositories of the gentle-fierce fighter and lover whom we call "Jesus", who had only one passion—the passion to Service.

Think of this Man, who always spoke of and treated the other half of the human race with reverence, treating that woman-half as Comrade and Equal, giving His endorsement to the lopsided bachelor-view of some of the Pauline sages—good but how often mistaken men! Imagine Him taking the view of the later Fathers of the Church, such as St. Augustine or St. Anthony, and with a certain steadfast remorselessness regarding Woman as the enemy—the temptress of frail masculinity! Those of them who would even compel her to cover her head when she entered the church as symbol, not of her modesty, but of her inferiority.

Think of Him who once found seated alone, at the foot of His cross, His mother, when all the male disciples had abandoned Him, thinking of her as "temptress" and inferior!

Even the fine and splendid warrior-christian, Paul himself, who, though he had from women received unfailing comfort and even guidance, in the foolish fear of a man who doubtless found "the flesh" press heavily upon him, relegated her to an inferior position in the primitive church—that "Church" which, in its strait-jacketed dogmatic form, some of us are beginning to realise, was itself an anomaly in the christian scheme. For if ever there were anything remote from the "Idea" of Jesus, as we can see even in the at times possibly imperfect record of His sayings, it was the

foundation and organisation of a Church, fixed, immovable, upon the dogmas of the theologians. To many it seems that Jesus came only to found His church in the hearts and minds of men and women as individuals.

The truth is at last breaking in upon thinking men and women that, in a sense, “Christ has been organised out of the Church”.

When “organisation” takes the place of faith and works for any church, it is the beginning of the end!

For any Christian Church to live, it must constantly hark back to its fount—that is Jesus. It is from that fount it draws its life. One other thing it must also do. It must always keep abreast of life and living—and always *look forward*. This systole and diastole, it seems to me at least, are the conditions of all life, whether of church or individual.

The fact is that we have all of us and in all nations undergone this strange metamorphosis which has robbed the message of Jesus of its heart and us of our God. It is this priestly metamorphosis and theological artifice which has sometimes made the “Christian” adopt instinctively a superior attitude to the non-christian, and has made certain strongholds of dogma insist that there is only one way to salvation—through the tiny strangulated gate of their fastness, and so regard all that stand outside as being “without the pale”. A spirit which compels the devotee of dogma at any moment to fling overboard friendship and all human relationship and follow his priest, even in the face of humanity itself.

It seems to me one of the queerest things even in this

world of paradox that all this has never been noted in any special way. Yet it is, I believe, this strange metamorphosis of Jesus with its claim to "infallibility" and a "corner in salvation", to put it vulgarly, which has literally robbed many Churches of the semblance of Christianity, has made the average man and woman, and with sound spiritual instinct, turn from the priests of dogma and from the "professing Christian", a term which so often, as we all know, in our day, to be a synonym for contempt.

The "churchy" voice. The "churchy" atmosphere. How are they not suspect, as they come to us out of the pulpit or over the wireless, in a day when such things are being increasingly regarded as "the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual *disgrace*" which in our time has overtaken so many organised establishments when they barter contact with the life-spirit for worldly "success" and compromise!

And yet having said all this, unchallengeable though I believe it to be, let us not forget that even the priests and laymen of dogma are but victims of their own unimagination, and that at heart they are "human beings", who are always much better than the system which has caught them in its net. That they are, slightly incredible though it may sometimes seem, men and women rather than theologians, *human* rather than "religious". That, could they but break from the shackles of dogma and tradition and "get back to Jesus", they could show forth "The Light of the World" which so often glimmers within some dim recess—a holy flame waiting the hour to burst forth in all its glory.

It is especially for these poor victims of their own pathological projections, I believe that Jesus would have

that god-like pity and tolerance which lay at the root of His philosophy of life—a pity and tolerance which they so often have banished. He, at least, would not shut such out from the salvation which is His and His Father’s love.

XIX

THE NEW "MOVEMENTS"

Youth calls to youth and deep to deep,
The Ancients stir uneasy in their sleep—
Science tells Faith that what it knows but *seems*—
Young men see visions and old men dream dreams.

THERE is, however, now, nearly at mid-century, as the inevitable repercussion to all these century-old metamorphoses of Dogma, a change coming over the spirit of the dream that is Religion and God, and with it a return to the religion of Jesus.

Every now and then we find the Churches we have been considering stirring uneasily in their long sleep, feeling in the Unconscious where all the deeper things first make themselves felt, that all is not well with them. Of such were the Oxford Group and Wesleyan Methodist and Salvation Army movements of an earlier day and of such are the "Oxford Movements" of our day.

In our day we are actually seeing emotional waves rushing across Europe of a spiritual intensity and scope with no parallel for two thousand years.

These "movements" have their day and pass, as we know from history, but the spirit that moves them does not pass—for it is the spirit of "divine dissatisfaction" which is the Spirit of God. No, not even though, as we have seen in the past, some of these movements have been modified or absorbed by the very dogmas and practices they set out to battle.

If "letters to the papers" and protests within the fold at its annual assemblies of almost any Church one cares to mention, can be taken to mean anything, it is beginning to be realised, to-day by a minority and

will be realised to-morrow by a majority, that many of the Churches, hag-ridden by dogma, live under a sort of fetishism, their gods fetishes, their formulæ fetishes—heritage from our outlived past. It is slowly being understood that from birth to death, generation after generation had been poisoned at the source, which is the child, that the Child in the past had been inoculated with the virus of dogma—never more virulent than when it believes itself dogma-free—that it had not had the opportunity to keep abreast with the newer freer concepts of religion in which alone in all the things of life there was for such children no advance. And so the bad work of estrangement between God and Man went on and the sins of the fathers were, and literally, visited upon the children! But all that is changing in our day.

Now, for the first time in history, millions of children are growing up with freedom “to think for themselves” and to exchange ideas and thoughts upon religion with their dogma-freed mothers and fathers . . . and thank God for it! As the theologian, frantic for his vanishing power, would put it, “They are growing up without religion” . . . and again, thank God for it! for they certainly are so growing up if “religion” mean “dogma” instead of life and living and the feeling of God as Friend.

Even the most bigotist of the Jehovah-Churches are being compelled by the force of economic and social pressure to permit to their members the reading of books, scientific and others, which only a little time ago were on their “Indexes” as unfit for reading. Which is the beginning of the end!

These young minds are in our day free for the first

time to develop their own thoughts in thousands of modern homes in which the fathers and mothers, touched by the new spirit of a "human" God, understanding that they themselves know little more about God than their own children, work and develop with the child and give to the child-mind and expression the same consideration and freedom they ask for the expression of their own feelings about religion. And it is these young minds that are behind the new "movements" which are making ready for a religion of Youth instead of the Religion of Age. Where Youth is behind a movement, there is nothing to fear ultimately for that movement—for the spirit of youth is the Spirit of God!

Official Christianity had hitherto been the religion of Fear—fear being the veil which shut out Jesus and His revelation of a "Human God".

Now, in the abolition by many churches of "hell", a great leap forward has been taken, even though they are the last to realise that in abolishing hell, they have abolished themselves! And now, also, we are rapidly coming to the understanding that we carry our hells and heavens within our own hearts—and *nowhere else*, that God works only through Natural Law, and that when we pass Death's Great Divide, we find the light shining over there on the other side in a state of existence of which we are beginning dimly to have some idea of the conditions and possibilities.

In one way, that abolition is symptomatic of the New Religion of Love which is replacing the Old Religion of Fear.

With this goes the feeling that our only chance as human beings searching out and studying infinity, is to be humble, not with the mock superimposed "humility" of certain fanatical religionists, but with that

humility which, the source of all knowledge, makes us ask with the sage: For which one of us hath known God at any time?—that God of which we still almost know nothing beyond the fact of His existence and His love. For no one has known God at any time—most of all no church and no theologian, as their differing dogmas prove. *Theology is the blind science.*

But I think the guiding star of these new movements towards light out of the darkness, is the gradual realisation that we *can* see Something behind life which makes for good—something that is persistent, as evil is spasmodic, as all human experience proves, and with it Intelligence and Plan. Also that to prayer, winged by faith, there is answer. With this goes one other thing—the realisation that this is all, really, that Man knows *definitely* about God—the thing that is the only proof of His existence, the only “Real Presence”, when, with the passing of dogma and fear, in our day of swift transition in religion, God the Friend is drawing near at last to Man the Friend.

It is a good thing to be the Friend of God.

GOD AND POLITICS

The sleuthy player at politic,
Mouthing of God and Country, Faith and Kings,
That artful lays his booby-traps,
Baiting and setting even while he sings
Contempt of power and pride and pelf—
Only to fall into them all himself.

I BELIEVE that the spirit behind all these new spiritual movements of our time is slowly but surely entering into every domain of human conduct—even into those of finance and politics.

It has been said that "The Devil's Trinity" is the Theologian, the Politician, and the Lawyer. If an increasing number of reflective people are beginning to think there must be some truth in this, such people, in the natural indignations begotten of their awakenings, if they be wise, will also remember that there have been some self-sacrificing and sincere theologians, politicians and lawyers, even though such generous souls, themselves muddled, have often chafed under systems which they felt in their inmost hearts could not be justified either of God or man.

At any rate, as one speaks of the theologian, one naturally thinks of the professional politician with whom he has so often allied himself in the union of Church and State which, through the centuries, had dominated our world. For these two are of the same habit of thought.

Here we are concerned with the Politician in relation to the Idea of God. That sentence alone lays bare the bill of eternal divorcement which seems to exist between

the Party Politics of our day and our God. For which politician of them all would dare to tell the world that before he enters Parliament or goes upon the hustings he prays for guidance to Him who is the God of Politicians as He is the God of all things—living and dead? Which one of them, indeed, *dare* pray to the God of Justice, to which, in his speeches, the politician is always appealing, to help him in the chicanery and subterfuge of our present-day politics?

It is said that William Ewart Gladstone did actually try to bring God into Parliament by habitually praying to Him for help in his work as statesman, a celestial alliance which at times he must have found extremely inconvenient! And, doubtless politicians here and there, shutting their eyes as far as possible to politics' doubtful ambitions and motives, and with the facile self-hypnosis of the political mind, do try, honestly enough, to feel that God is with them when they introduce a Bill or address the world's Parliaments. But such cases must be as rare as snow in summer, if only because a very tiny consideration of the humbug and wire-pulling behind the scenes would prevent any decent man from inviting the co-operation of God in such a witches' pot!

I think it may be said, without unfairness, that in no department of public life, unless it be that of Religion, have we so shut God out as in the political. Were some brave soul, becoming for the moment a really “practical politician”, taking his political life in his hands and with it saving his soul alive, to tell his brother members in the British House that religion and politics should be one and that, instead of the studied mechanical prayers of Commons' chaplains, the living personal appeal should be substituted, it is safe to say he would be ostracised as having been guilty of “bad form” in

the English Parliament—the only sin there recognised. As for the Latin and some of the other Continental Chambers, I imagine his fellows would not even know what he was talking about and would simply say: “This man is mad!” Nor do I doubt that at least in any Anglo-Saxon Parliament of our day where the State Church is represented, it would fall to the lot of the theological representative in the House to say with bell, book and candle and with suitable prayers—“This man hath a devil!”

So far, indeed, have our politicians, and in all countries, come away from the Idea of God in the Council Chamber.

Nor must we be led away by the fact that, especially when they are contemplating some peculiarly unpleasant piece of “statesmanship”, the political leaders of certain countries of the English-speaking world have the habit of invoking the name of God as blessing and justification. However, the invocation of the name of God, particularly in his older Jehovah guise as “God of Battles”, is common to the statesmen of most of the nations. So far, at least, “God” is “practical politics”.

At the time of the Great War, the little man of all lands, confused in his thought, sentimentally befuddled, often fed by tongue and the printed word, upon peptonised pap, was confronted with the following strange spectacle:

He saw the Parliaments of the conflicting nations all calling upon the one God who is Father to all of us to bless the rival battle flags, and the rival poison gases, just as he saw the priests of the different Christian churches in those countries do the same, and call upon

the name of the Prince of Peace! And as he marvelled at the labyrinthine and accommodating cunning of the political and theological minds, he found that in the supreme and international Church of the Jehovah-God, the priests of that church in one group of warring countries were calling upon their God to bless their particular flags and cause, whilst the priests of the same church in the opposition group of countries were doing the same!

It must have been immensely puzzling for the Celestial Powers!

But it never occurred to him in his bewilderment that if modern wars were fought strictly upon questions of right and wrong and upon their merits, we should find half the population of each country fighting on the side of the opponents of that country! But just as whether we are Christians or Moslems or Buddhists, Protestants or Roman Catholics, depends upon the country and religion in which we are born, so does the flag for which we fight in battle also depend.

Human beings can do almost everything except *think*!

The political issues of our day are rarely spiritual issues. Rarely indeed are they even *life*-issues. As men like myself who have run the whole gamut of the political strings behind the scenes, and in many countries, and have watched that “looping the loop” which we call “statesmanship”, know, the modern political issue is as often as not concerned only with party or personal advantage—and as regards the latter, how often have we not seen leaders of the “democratic” movements of our day, and in many countries, “sell out” for place and power—what time they call passionately upon their gods in justification thereof! The international diplomatic poker-play at the League of

Nations, and the failure of what was to have been "the Council of God and the Parliament of Man", whatever its ultimate fate, has alone proved this for all time. Indeed it was this very power-lust which destroyed the great movement of a generation ago for international recognition of the Brotherhood of Man, known as the Socialist International.

If there still be those who doubt that we have banished God from our politics, I would ask this question: Where would the gentle Jesus find His seat upon those Seats of the Mighty where, "pride in their port, defiance in their eye", the political chiefs nightly play the oldest game in the world—that of throwing dust in the eyes of one another and of the public? Where would the only really Practical Politician who ever lived if only because his political and life-philosophies were one, being based upon Love, find his spiritual home in the parliaments of our day? He who taught that all men were brothers, in assemblies given over so largely to the making of war and teaching the fingers of the Little Ones to fight with bombing plane and poison? He who told them to bring those same "little ones" to Him to bless them—who was known as the Prince of Peace?

I have written that I believe that Jesus, were He to come to earth in our day—and for all we know He may even now in spirit be walking amongst us—and were He to seek to enter the pulpits of the orthodox, would be driven out. What would be His fate in the earth's *parliaments*?

It is generally admitted that no man has ever spoken so truly and closely as the interpreter of God the Father and Friend as Jesus of Nazareth. That being

so, what would be the *feeling* of “Jesus the Christ” towards the politics of our day?

I believe, following His own words and His loving-kindness for the poor and wretched, that He would place such social measures as the abolition of the slums, Britain’s National Disgrace, before any other measures, so that His Little Ones, instead of being brought up in misery and degradation as millions of them still are in our modern cities, should be reared in the light of day and so given a chance to see God the Friend and Father and to feel Him near to them—and with Him, His “dearly beloved” son to whom those little ones were dearer than aught else.

Jesus the Politician would, in a word, unless all His own words be “sounding brass and tinkling cymbal” have placed Social Measures before those measures of War or Party which for Him would have no meaning.

“Practical politics” to Him, would be the removal of that economic and other pressure which, directly or indirectly, helps to lead to the shame of the “White Slave Traffic”, and which has placed upon the streets of London and the cities of the Continent and America hundreds of thousands of girls, some of them not more than children. All of which, as the millions of unemployed, our party politicians accept with a blatant equanimity that is dazzling simply because these things are not “practical politics”, because they do not carry votes, those votes for which the party man alone lives. If the young prostitute used her vote and made prostitution a living issue, or the casual labourer did the same, how soon would not our political leaders sit up and take note! That certain parties are in our day at last beginning to make these things questions of practical politics only “points the moral and adorns the tale”, and even they are careful in dressing what they call the “shop-window”

of party to discreetly relegate such unpleasantnesses to the back parlour.

For Him, the "practical politician" would be he who, instead of concentration upon experiments in poison gas, incendiary and bacteriological bombs, the spy system and the whole miserable chicanery and machinery of War, or the artificial bolstering up of privilege, would give his brain, and his *heart*, to a system of education which would be one not only in books, but in human experience. One who would ask the professors of our universities, not so much "What do you *know*?" as "What do you *feel*?" Who would substitute for the passing of parrot examinations the only examination that matters—the examination of life and of living.

When did Jesus ever seek to cajole His congregations as the politician cajoles his voters? Can any one of us imagine Jesus, scornful of shams, seeking the suffrages of the political audience by vain promises of "doles" and the chance of "an easy life", when the whole object of existence is hard living and harder thinking? And as for the Parties—would He not say: "A plague on *all* your Parties!"—He who served but one party—the party we call "God"?

What He would have to say to the "practical politicians" who tacitly deride His Golden Rule upon the ground that it is not "practical" and who, because they were so "practical", plunged Europe into a war which took a toll upon thirty millions of people, leading to preparations for "the next Great War", I leave to His recorded utterances two thousand years ago to the counterparts of these politicians and to the imagination.

And in all this, I am relying only upon the utterances of the original Jesus, as recorded in the un-interpolated and untouched portions of the New Testament, which,

I again insist, are genuine records of the most unique Personality that has ever visited our earth and who was the greatest “statesman” of all time, if only because the truth of His teaching has been proved by experience.

What the politician, blinded as he is by this lust to power, never recognises is that neither he nor anybody else can escape their repercussions. There is, for example, scarcely a politician in to-day’s Germany who realises that it was the seed sown by the unholy black trinity of the Junker, the Professor, and the Politician under the German Jehovah, with its worship of Power and the deifying of “authority”, which brought about the aftermath of our time, one to be some day followed by a Red Harvest of death. Least of all perhaps do those hundreds of professors, who for conscience’ sake have fled from the Fatherland to refuge in other countries realise this—even though they themselves helped, all unconsciously, to sow the seed!

Nothing happens to any one of us which does not come from our own actions in this life or others, for something cannot come out of nothing and there is a terrible justice in the retributions of what is Natural Law.

We cannot escape our vibrations. If we give out the love-vibration, love comes to us—if hate, then hate. But when the politicians of Europe learn this, they will no longer be politicians but peacemakers, no longer lovers of power but lovers of souls.

Men and women in our day are asking these questions, thinking these thoughts. The almost universal dissatisfaction, one spiritual as much as economic, with our party politics and their leaders, is one of the

symptoms of the day which is coming when Politics, Life and Religion shall be one, when men and women will find their countries' salvation not along the crooked weed-choked way of the party-politician, but by the broad road of love and service that leads to God the Friend, in a time when for the professional politician we shall have substituted the spiritual leader.

I would even venture to believe that men and women of spirit and intelligence are about to make the discovery that the future advance of mankind is to be by "religion" and not by what we call "politics". Indeed, if you come to think of it, in a religion that is life and living there is no room for the "politician".

For, in the end, it will yet be found that the policy and method of Jesus of Nazareth was the policy and method of the only Practical Politician who ever lived on this earth.

GOD AND NATIONALITY

I am your God
 Jehovah-Jah
 I'm what I am
 The god of war
 My voice of brass
 My arm of steel
 I call to you
 That I am *real!*
 Iron-bowelled I
 Jah-Caliban
 Almost Immortal
 Nearly a Man
 I curse your foes
 To me you pray
 Your only business
 To obey.

I am the Joss
 You are the slave
 To me, the Boss
 Cradle to grave
 A jealous god
 I rest on "faith"
 But at my nod
 You rest on death
 I brook no other
 For me you yield
 Father and mother
 Sweetheart and child
 Bow down! Bow down!
 To me belong
 For you "*your country*
Right or wrong!"

POLITICS and War with Nationality and Patriotism are inextricably interlaced. They bubble together in the Witches' Pot of the International Politics of our day. When we discuss one, we find we are discussing all. It seems to me that particularly where nationality and patriotism are concerned, we have curiously warped our understandings about the part which God plays in all this.

Man still "makes God in his own image". That being so, it is little wonder that to him God is a "national" God, encouraging His children in all countries to narrow "patriotisms" and teaching them that "to kill for one's country is a virtue". But it has been reserved to our day to see man's supreme degradation of the Idea of God in the atavistic attempt of certain nations, and notably in the case of one great

continental nation, to have Him as a "tribal god"—the special perquisite of the particular nation, always conveniently ready to bless that nation and to curse its enemies!

When Man the Finite thinks of God the Infinite, he thinks of him in finite, even parochial terms. The Cosmic Idea of a God who is the God of the Universes lies nearly as far outside the conception of the average man as the concept of that man himself lies outside the mind of an ant or a bee. Man is still an insect crawling inside the bowl we call Life and knowing as little of the Universe by which he is surrounded and of which he is a part, and to which, whether theologian or scientist, he loves to give the high-sounding names which are often but masks for his ignorance.

One thing we may say without fear of contradiction—that God is not a National but an International God. "Inter-nation" in the sense that God is the Friend and Father of all nations, not standing specially for any one of them. To invoke the aid of God in a modern war for the markets, which are the only object of all wars in our day—markets which have ceased to exist in the gradual stopping of the Commercial Machine—on the side of any one nation or group of nations as against the others, is as ridiculous as each unit of a family of quarrelling children asking the father to step in and "beat the other fellow". For we humans have not only lost our sense of God—we have also lost our sense of humour! and, if we would only understand, God often speaks much more effectively to us through humour than in any other way.

We still have the idea that when God speaks, He does so in pontifical voice "out of a cloud!" We never conceive of Him laughing *at* and *with* us—and at what,

in our optimistic moments, we are inclined to regard as the whole "Great Lark" of our earth. The fact is that God *never* speaks to us out of the frown—always out of the smile, which may be one of pity, but always one of understanding.

To me, an "inter-nationist", nationality is a precious thing—for it is the Greater Individuality. A family of people all exactly like one another would be boring; a nation of people of the same type would be characterless; and a world of equals would be appalling! The Irishman, the Englishman, the Scotsman and the Welshman are all as completely different from one another psychologically as they themselves, all English-speaking, are different from the Frenchman, the German, the Italian or the American. The nations of the East, again, though that East has given the world all its religions and Europe its Christianity, however bowdlerised as we have seen this "Christianity" has become, are as completely remote from the thought-currents of the West, as in that same "East" the Indian is remote from the Japanese, the Chinese from either, and the African from all.

Yet they all have the same Father—God; the same Life-Mother. They all draw their spiritual, and even their physical sustenance from the same Fount of Life that Jesus called Love, which in "service" finds its expression. And it is from their intense diversity and from the clash of the thought of Black and White, Brown and Red, that the evolution of this little mud ball turning in space springs. I suppose that of all the more futile things, "colour-feeling" is the most futile. It is the real "colour-blindness"!

Jesus Himself was essentially an Oriental, yet never once did He, as so many of His followers, differentiate between White and Black, Brown and Yellow, who for

Him were all "God's chillun". He was as much of the West as of the East.

There is a legend that during those mysterious eighteen years from 12 to 30 when, to complete his Initiation, He disappeared from the human ken to lose Himself within, what some of us believe to have been the Essenic teaching, He visited both Ireland and India. If He did, I am sure he found Himself equally "at home" in both, as He would have found Himself at home anywhere on this earth. For He was the great human Lover, was Jesus the "Inter-nationalist", but of an internationalism of another kind than that of the "class-conscious" Moscow, which, originally inspired by movements based upon the ethics and spirit of Jesus, has now become . . . what it is, a dogma-ridden dictatorship.

What I think has happened in our development of the concept of a "National" God, is that we confuse "Patriotism" with "Nationhood". Instead of realising that a man may be true to his own country, be proud of the good things of that country, and feel with that country because He and it are of the same "vibration", without hating any other country, we have tacitly imagined that to be true to our own means to be jealous or fearing of others, and that "Our country right or wrong!" is a necessary concomitant of nationality.

I believe that this false conception of nationhood which we miscall "patriotism", with its feeling that under a system of international competition it must battle for the world markets, is at the root of nearly all wars, as it is at the root of the idea that our own country is the special concern of God the Father of All.

When Man, and particularly when Woman, understands that nationality, as the “Greater Individuality”, is something given to us in trust, a gift beyond price, and part of the greater “Inter-nationality”, we shall, I think, have come closer to the thought of Jesus who loved all nations, irrespective of colour or class or clime or creed. The very purpose of nationality is “differentiation”, and each nation is fed, some think, by reincarnated souls of various degrees of evolution and understanding, each one finding his own “vibration” according to his ante-natal history and previous incarnations. Whether this be so or not, we can at least trace the distinct types of “group-soul” born into and peculiar to each country. Nor can what is loosely termed “heredity” alone account for this, as it has frequently been noted that the children of foreigners born in any country show the characteristics and even the psychology of the country in which they are born rather than of those of the countries from which their parents came. This is particularly noticeable in Ireland, where the children of English-born parents are often more Irish than the Irish themselves, and this is one of those “stray illuminants” of the puzzle of life which so often yield rich returns if faithfully followed to the source. No man can be a good Inter-nationalist who is not first a good Nationalist, for no man can understand the greater until he has understood the lesser. Nationality is part of Internationality, and, once again, there is one glory of the moon and another of the stars.

And “all God’s chillun got wings”, sings the African who, in his “spirituals”, I think, has, in one way, got closer to the idea of “God the Friend” than any other human being.

But the modern elevation and sublimation of

nationality into a sort of god—indeed one which to-day throughout Europe frequently replaces the Idea of God—is one I believe abhorrent to the Power behind Life. What the Dictators and others who have sought to replace the idea of a Universal God by one that is purely national, do not know, is that they are but atavistically falling back to the old tribal idea of Jahweh, and so, mediævalists that they are, are driving their countries back into the Darker Ages of humanity, when Black Magic and the Black Magician in various forms ruled the minds of men and women, who, as the son of a Zulu chief once said to me in Zululand, “were killed by their minds”.

But there is one thing none of these newer Dictators can do. Although they can hold up progress for a time, they cannot make history retrace her footsteps—the clock cannot be put back. Man has outgrown these childish tribal conceptions of the Power Behind Life, and on Life’s Ascending Spiral, though atavist that he is, he may at times retrograde to older concepts, he will always reject them ultimately for concepts upon another and higher plane of thought.

Periodically, in the history of our little earth, man has found loosed upon him the Great Reactions, which themselves seem part of the Greater Spiritual Repercussions which invariably follow them, a combined phenomenon which appears to be part of the Life-Plan of what we sometimes call the Architect of the Universe. Of such was the Great War of 1914–1918, which, tearing up prejudices and preconceptions, freed two exactly opposite sets of forces to battle for the soul of our planet, and, as one sees, out of the shock to release new and vaster spiritual waves of emotion than this earth has before experienced.

One group of these darker forces is to be found in the

movements towards “National” Gods and with them the elevation of the State into a sacrosanct position. Another set of the same group are the Communist Experiments, which, however, differing in terminology from the others, are identical in spirit, in method, and in outlook. Both groups are direct attacks upon the freedom of the individual, whom they reduce to an automaton, but more subtly are an attack upon that free will and individual thought which is the principle behind our world. Such experiments, challenging as they do what is the driving force of progress, will, after a shorter or longer reign, finally be swept up into the dustbins of evolution. We shall see in the countries of both groups vast upheavals before many years are flown, for their leaders have built on sand.

Ranged over against these forces, in what is, if you like to call it that, an Armageddon of the Gods, we find springing into being throughout Europe in particular the “New Movements” as I have elsewhere called them, with Youth at the helm, and which have the forces of light behind them—that White Company the existence of which is as certain as that of any earthly army corps and infinitely more potent. These movements, so far as nationality and war go, are characterised by certain things.

First of all, they are challenges to the old order, whether priestly, political or military. Then, generally speaking, they seek to combine Reason and Intuition where nationhood is concerned, making no demands upon the dumb brute acquiescence of their rank and file. Further, they insist upon Love as a Rule of Life replacing that of Hidden Diplomacy with its inevitable concomitant physical force. And lastly, what seems to me significant in a spirit common to them all, they are increasingly inclined to declare that all War in which

the individual, if he wishes, is prevented from using his right to refuse to fight is murder, and that the plea of "killing no murder" when it is in uniform can no longer be upheld. I believe, rightly or wrongly, that it is upon this last they will find a common platform in their attack upon the concepts of an older nationalism and upon what they will call "Murder in Uniform".

Behind this new flood of light which is bursting upon our earth-darkness, I believe there is the Spirit of God, which, in the Worlds Invisible, for all we know may be carrying on the same battle of darkness against light between the forces diabolic and the angelic host. Man, in our day, as we can see and hear in press and pulpit, is becoming dimly percipient of such battles of the invisible world about us—battles to which, Jesus like His greater followers, again and again referred. "Those that have ears to hear—let them hear!"

This tiny earth is but a microcosm of the macrocosm of higher spheres of existence, where, be sure, our concepts and our conflicts are reproduced upon a vaster scale. To say which is but to say what the Greater Mystics from John the Revelator to Jesus of Nazareth have recorded, and it is, one thinks, the popular recognition of this "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" which has led people to dream of Second Day Advents and Millenniums—often, if you like, foolishly to dream.

The wise man discounts such cruder concepts. The wiser man sees in them straws in the wind—pointing the blind recognition of the subconscious mind of the Great Average that great events are afoot and that the Spirit of God is moving once more in the souls of men and women.

I venture to think that out of the present mad and sad tendencies to exacerbated nationalism, will one day come the idea of the Commonwealth of Nations, in

which each nation will be respected and will respect itself as a Greater Individuality—but one in which the deadly pest of War as arbiter, replaced by discussion, will have passed for ever from men's ken. For by then War will no longer be necessary as a terrible spur to man's efforts to free himself from his entanglement in matter, the purpose of which, to give direction and experience to Spirit, will then have been fulfilled.

And I also believe that any man or woman who, refusing to judge by appearances, will sit down to think out what I have above written, will find something of Plan behind all these world-movements of our day, whether they are what we call “good” or “bad”—two terms which one day will be meaningless.

To use a popular phrase: Nothing happens for nothing! Or to put what is the Law of Life in more scientific language: “To every action there is equal and contrary reaction.”

The blind and ignorant rather than deliberately evil actions of the Black Magicians of our day, whether in the domain of religion or politics, are already having those “equal and contrary reactions” in which the history of the translation of the Europe of our time to a new and spiritual concept of life is being written. I believe that the next half century will show miraculous changes in the lives and outlook of nearly all countries. We are living in what will one day be known as “The Great Transition”. For men and women are about to find their “Internationality” in their Nationality.

THE GOD OF ECONOMICS

The Brassy Ones that hold the golden scales
 In which are human souls and £ s. d.,
 In crafty calculation of the Golden Chance,
 Cunningly forecasting Things to Be,
 Calling upon their god—and Mammon is his name,
 Watching the turning of the chancy bowl—
The Game's the thing—the Game!
 What though to gain a world they lose a soul!

INCREASINGLY, and as will have been apparent in these pages, in the struggles for existence in our day, upon a scale never dreamed by our ancestors, questions of politics and patriotism are invariably bound up with those of Economics. For the modern statesman and soldier they are all one. So far as War itself is concerned it is safe to say that were there no markets there would be no wars and were there no desire for—"expansion"—a term embracing both good and bad—Britain and the other countries could fling the last rifle after the last gas-bomb into the sea.

That we rarely use the word "God" in connection with our business, Big or other, is, I think, curious. Man, together with that Big Business which certainly does not suffer from over-sensitiveness, has the feeling that God and our economic system do not go well together! Only in "These Great United States" has there been any attempt to invoke the blessing of the Most High upon what is called "High Finance", and even there, the attempt, despite the lavish endowment of churches and chapels and universities by the "Trusts", has broken down.

Yet even those very Trusts, associated as they have been with so many business "wars" and with the crushing out of the small trader—an inevitable sacrifice on the road of evolution—have brought into being, all unknowing to themselves, for money-making is the supreme stupefier, international machinery which is preparing the way for the day when free exchange of commodities between nations will be the rule. Like the cinema, these gigantic agglomerations of capital are breaking down the barriers of non-knowledge between the various countries, and will ultimately, I believe, with the indifference or even against the will of their organisers, pave the way for the Brotherhood of Man and Parliament of the World of which the minorities of spirit in our day are once more speaking.

We keep God outside our Churches, our Parliaments, and our "Patriotism", but that we also keep Him outside the Business of Life—in a word, outside those Economics which occupy four-fifths of our working lives, is perhaps the most significant of all.

It is, one imagines, a healthy sub-conscious instinct which makes even quite ordinary people feel that with much of our economic system and our commercial world a God of Love has little to do. Yet, God is never a "preacher"—evil is, so to speak, "His job," and He is with us in the mart and the counting-house as much as with us in Church or in Parliament, even though we sometimes think we have effectively kept Him outside.

God and Big Business, like oil and water, "don't mix".

All this is one thinks a pity! For the longer the Idea of God, which is the Idea of Love and Justice, is kept outside our present economic systems, the longer will those systems endure upon that "buying in the cheapest

and selling in the dearest market" which an increasing number of people are beginning to feel, is the antithesis of love and justice.

For our Friend can no more be excluded from these departments of human life than we could exclude a ghost from a house.

Libraries have been written upon what may be called "The Business Man's relation to God", in an attempt to "square the circle" and accommodate a God of Justice and Love to what is often a commercial world of injustice and hate. I do not propose to enter into these involved, but often naïvely sincere disquisitions. I prefer to put the "God of Economics" against the background of those economics and of our modern commercial system and with it to ask a series of simple questions "understandable of the people".

It is useless insisting that we *ought* to have a perfect system of justice and equality in the world of commerce. Neither Nature nor God work in that way. The fact is that we have *not* such a system; that possibly a system which is based upon the principle of "buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market" is not in accordance with what we call "the laws of God"; and that, in their ultimates, Rent, Profit and Interest are indefensible.

At the moment, and indeed as it has been for centuries, the World of Commerce is endorsed generally and with few exceptions by the Churches and the Political Parties. No Church has ever, so far as I know, come right out into the open and insisted that our World of Big Business, which means a "fight for the markets", itself a prelude to the projection of the war of the counting-house into the war of Poison Gas and Big Guns, is un-christian, and that the teachings of the Nazarene are in direct opposition to its ethics or rather ethical

lacks. Our world has, indeed, before now, “listened in” to or read the highest dignitaries of the Christian Churches defending the use of force *con amore* and even invoking the name of the gentle Jesus, the “Prince of Peace”, in that defence. We have even seen a certain continental nation instal the head of a church as the spiritual head of the nation with the gospel of physical force as the cornerstone of the National Church.

In all this there is no question of socialism or anti-socialism, of communism or conservatism, the red herrings which the professing christian, at war with his own principles, so often draws across the trail. It is a question of plain right and wrong—indeed of plain common sense—that is to say of the rarest of all senses.

We are living in a world in which, according to the best authorities available, social and economic, there can be grown more than enough food for the whole human race, in which there need not be a single homeless child, man or woman; and in which education, spiritual and intellectual, could be made free to all.

In that world, as we know, unemployment is steadily rising; “commercial crises” are coming of increasing scope and of decreasing period; millions of children and adults are starving; there is a nearly incredible overcrowding; in some countries a notable access of crime; increase in lunacy in all countries; and possibly no real decrease in disease, especially in cancer, as is shown in the influenza and other epidemics which periodically sweep our world. Where in all this unfriendliness is there room for the spirit of God the friend?

God sees all this as we see it. Nothing is hidden from Him. In a hundred ways, He is asking us: “What are you going to do about it?” But engaged as we are in petty personal profit-making or in the desperate

and sordid struggle for the means of life, or living upon that "dole" which has become a part of many national lives, we turn to Him a deaf ear. "We have no time."

With all this, we find in this mad world the extraordinary phenomenon of country after country shutting themselves up, often under dictators, like bandboxes, until the free exchange of goods, which alone can make our physical life tolerable, becomes impossible. We find our economists, who have shut out religion from their economics, and those "blind leaders of the blind" nearly all of whose pre-war and even post-war forecasts have proved ludicrously wrong, playing monkey tricks with currencies, instead of getting down to the underlying causes of "reduction of purchasing power side by side with potential increase of productive power", which, with unfair and choked distribution, is the *only reason* for our economic troubles, as these strange beings at last are beginning, reluctantly, to admit.

We find, to take one instance out of a hundred, Canadian farmers burning their corn to the tune of millions of bushels because they "can't find markets" for their produce, in a world in which millions overseas are starving for want of that corn and hundreds of steamers are laid up for want of cargoes and with them thousands of seamen! We find millions of homeless in a world in which there are armies of unemployed bricklayers and brickmakers and vast spaces of land on which to build houses . . . because, under a crazy system, they can't be built "at a profit".

It is a mad world, my masters!—a world of mad materialism. But, then, all materialism is mad.

Not that the mechanical change of a system is going to alter the thing from which it springs—the human heart and mind—which is one of the century-old

delusions of our time, when the Utopian dreamt that by the abolition of Profit and Interest—the Unheavenly Twins, as they have been called, and with them the go-as-you-please and the devil take the hindmost system of free competition, they would abolish the tendencies of that intangible difficult entity known as Human Nature.

You can only change your systems when you have changed the human nature behind them, which itself is of all things both the least and most ductile to impression. If, for instance, to-morrow an all-powerful League of Nations abolished War from our planet by decree without the necessary preliminary spade-work of education, spiritual and intellectual, of the masses, and especially of their leaders, the world would possibly be at war within the year!

So with our Economics, which the Marxian units of the International Socialism of a generation or two ago—economic Determinists who deliberately left out God from the life of man—imagined, childishly, could be changed by Act of Parliament. That Socialism which, despite many fine ideals, forgot the Fatherhood of God which we call “religion”, in the Brotherhood of Man, although each was an essential part of the other.

Once more, there is, it seems to me, to be but one remedy for all this. It is to make a friend of God, to take Him and His message of Love which He has given through Jesus and others into our economics and our offices, and to ask ourselves: “What would Jesus do?”

Is there any one of us who does not know what “Jesus would do”? Do we not know that the unholy Trinity upon which we have built our commercial house of sand—Rent, Profit and Interest—would seem

to Him less sacred than the life of any single one of His children? Do we not know that He would replace "production for profit" by "production for use", and that, abolishing as this would the dreadful World-Wars which threaten the very existence of our civilisation, in so doing He would be but carrying into practice the word of His and our Friend, God? If Jesus, as He may, ever return to our earth, He will be economist as much as preacher in a world at last ready to hear the Second Part of His message—that is the *Practice* to follow the *Rule*.

God the Friend and Father, leaving to us our most precious possession, our Free-Will, never seeks arbitrarily to interfere and to superimpose "perfect systems" upon us and so reduce us to Divine Automata. He leaves us to work out our salvation and the salvation of our world "in fear and trembling"—but now, as many of us are beginning to see, in full love and confidence in our Friend who stands behind.

And if it be properly asked: "How do you know that what we call 'God' stands behind all these new ideas of Politics and Nationalism, of Economics and what not?" the answer may be given simply: We can only know God through "experience" and "trends". These are the concepts which characterise all the forward movements of our day and generation and are the inspiration for the world-reformers who are now showing themselves in nearly all countries. "God," standing as He does for "good", is essentially constructive, and as we see the older systems go one by one crashing to the ground, we are also beginning to see the better and more spiritual principles and systems which are to replace them coming forward.

Above all, it is being generally recognised that Hate and Force having failed, Man has at last evolved to

the stage when our first trial of Love as a Practical Rule of Life, has become possible. There is no recorded failure of the Idea of Love to “work”, even in the apparent failure of the Man of Sorrows whose gospel it was, and whose message, after two thousand years of seeming failure, is at last coming into its own, even in the sphere of Economics. For there is one strange and universal phenomenon of this Age of Transition—that is the belief, instinctive and universal, that our economic system has to be completely metamorphosed before Man the Frankenstein can master the Machine-Monster he has created, and so with it, wipe out War and clear the way for a new Rule of Life for our planet.

XXIII

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

The lion and the unicorn, fighting for the crown,
Up comes the unicorn and horns the lion down,
The lion turns upon himself to bite the unicorn—
Only to find he's bit himself . . . and bit upon the horn!

IN nothing have the ordinary man and woman been more confused about *God and Religion* than in their relation to Science. For the past century and more this strange battle of what is called "Science versus Religion", has occupied men's thoughts to the exclusion of the reality behind.

It has largely been a mock battle, one fought with paste-board weapons, for in its essence the issue for which they seemed to fight has never had existence!

Science cannot fight with Religion—for *science and religion are but two facets of the same reality*, one the brain, the other the heart. It is as though the brain were to say to the heart—I hate you! To which the heart might reply: "But you cannot do without me any more than I can do without you."

Then what has been the cause of this "Alice in Wonderland" battle, in which neither side ever really knew for what it was battling?

I think the cause is easy to understand.

Half a century ago, the Bible was taken, literally, not only as "the Word of God", but as God's *only* Word. It was taken literally. Anything that challenged the literal interpretation of the most extraordinary and interesting collection of books and on its New Testament

side the most inspiring guide to conduct ever given to man had, therefore, to be taken as antagonistic to God.

When Science proved to our world that the earth went round the sun, and not the sun round the earth, as seemed to be intimated in Genesis, and therefore that the Bible could not be taken literally, the world of the Churches, after first denying, remained silent in face of a fact which even it had to admit. But when Science, going farther, insisted that Man had evolved from some ape-like ancestor, as Darwin had asserted, the Churches instantly were up in arms. It seemed not only a tacit challenge to their humanity but to their divinity. In a word, it seemed a challenge to their God.

The Scientists on their part, never understanding that these scientific revelations of our day did not really challenge the Spiritual Revelation of which they were part, gradually came to regard the Churches and then Religion as the enemy of Science. For many decades it seemed to be a matter with many, but by no means all, either to take the agnostic position of saying that so far there was no proof of the existence of a God but that they were “open to conviction”, or to come out point blank as “atheists” and deny the existence of any kind of God whatever!

They could not foresee the day when, Science, having “looped the loop” of its own imagination, would, primarily through the mathematician, have practically abolished “matter” *qua* matter, and in the case of certain scientists be compelled, strictly upon the scientific evidence, to either admit or to postulate the existence of some Power behind Life having consciousness and purpose. Something to which in our day great scientists like Sir Oliver Lodge the physicist and Sir James Jeans the astronomer have not hesitated to give the name of “God”.

Nor could they foresee that utter failure of science when divorced from "passion" and "heart", that is, divorced from the religious instinct, and relying only upon intellect, which in our day has come to be known as "the bankruptcy of science". They could not forecast the realisation by the men and women of thought that although man and his helpmeet can possibly live without "science", they cannot live without "God".

Now the world and his wife are taking one more step along the path of realisation—towards the conviction that God and Science are one—or, to put it in another way, that "Science" is but a facet of "Religion", which itself is the fount and source of all things—indeed itself is everything.

Organised Religion at last is doing what it should have done centuries ago. It is being forced to face the facts of science and to admit them as facts, and with it to admit that no Religion can be real and true which separates itself from those facts. Now we find the Churches being slowly but reluctantly compelled to admit one other thing—the most notable advance in the Idea of God of our day. That is, the idea that God always works under a Natural Law that is majestic and universal; that never at any time is there any abrogation of that Law; and, indeed, that Natural Law is His *method* of revelation.

With all this in the advance of reading and education generally, is going the realisation by even the little ill-considered people of life that the Bible itself is a collection of books written at varying periods of the earth's history and reflecting, necessarily, the knowledge and understanding reached during those periods. That it is not to be and indeed cannot be taken literally, but that much of it must be taken symbolically or

allegorically, even though the most recent archæological excavations have shown for certain parts of the Bible, hitherto doubted, a most surprising accuracy of date and event. And above all, that in the New Testament, whatever its imperfection of reporting, we have a picture of the most beautiful as it is the most remarkable Personality of which we have record, behind Him that message of Love which I have stressed throughout these pages.

The battle of “Science versus Religion” is all over bar shouting. The more enlightened of the scientists know to-day perfectly well and are even now beginning to acknowledge that Science has its dogmas as well as Religion, and that, as the more reflective student is beginning to suspect, the dogmatic theologian has in many ways but been substituted by the dogmatic Scientist. We see that some of the most notable scientists living have been compelled *by their science* to abandon their agnostic and atheist attitude and have had to admit that most disturbing fact (to the scientist but not to the mystic) that what are apparently like causes do not always produce like effects; and that as Science broadens, it is being faced with Problems so gargantuan and complex as to leave the scientist helpless in the face of a Space that has become Time—both possibly like matter, apparitions of Mind and non-existent!—and of Universes within Universes illimitable and unending. All leading to the dissolution of its dogmas and forcing Science willy-nilly to the assumption of Plan and Architect behind those Universes.

It is, in fact, the dim emergence in certain scientific minds of “consciousness” and “intent”—of plan and meaning behind the chaoses of Time and Space—which is the outstanding fact of the Science of our day,

which has reconciled what used to be known as the problem of Science and Religion.

Of the Survival of Man of what we used to call "death",—a word now being substituted by other terms to express something that is not annihilation but transition and now passing from the language as knowledge advances—I here say nothing beyond the bare fact, which any reader of these words can prove for himself or herself, that in the opinion of some of the most notable minds of our day the survival of Memory and Identity after Death—that is to say of the Survival of the human soul, is as much a proved fact of science as any other.

God is the Scientist Supreme. Majestic, assured, He reveals Himself to us as we are able to bear it through that Natural Law which removes Him for ever from the blind category of Chance and human quality of the days when He was known as the "Jealous God". Little by little, He shows Himself to us, who, like new-born kittens, bear light badly, as the God of Light and therefore as the God of Science.

For the very Science now invincibly driven towards poesy, in its expression and content, of which we have said so many hard but I think true things, is itself by its demonstrations of Natural Law, giving comfort in that domain of the psychic and spiritual world which is its counterpart and in which, as here on this earth, Natural Law points majestic and assured to . . .

One last divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

There is something happening to Science in our day which is even yet hardly realised by the public—and by the scientists almost not at all. Science in the past was

like “The Girl who took the Wrong Turning” in the melodrama of that name, for it turned *outwards* instead of *inwards* where all knowledge lies. Particularly was this true of Medicine, which a century ago abandoned the experiments in psycho-therapeutics of Mesmer and Charcot, who rightly as it seems to me, regarding Mind as the determinative factor in the control of the body, sought to substitute what is now popularly known as “faith-healing” for the knife and the black draught. Now, as we know, medical science through psycho-analysis is once more returning to this theory of the control of Matter by Mind, which in many ways is the outstanding fact emerging in the Science of the Middle of the twentieth century.

Science, in a word, turned outwards to *appearance* instead of inwards to *reality*.

It turned outwards to phenomena, especially to the phenomena of matter, instead of to the Thing lying behind of which those phenomena were but the “appearances”.

Revolting, and rightly, from the chicaneries and unfounded assumptions of what passed for Religion in the old pre-science day, it rashly concluded that what could not be seen or felt did not exist and that therefore the soul had no existence and that the World Invisible was a presumption unfounded.

Instinctively, as do all human institutions, this new Science of the objective sought to protect itself by the erection of the walls of dogma, amongst which the above was the headstone of the corner. But to do so, it had, as have certain of the dogma churches which are its spiritual and intellectual counterparts, to deliberately ignore all evidence that clashed with its dogmas. So it was, incredible as it will seem to our descendants, that the Materialist Science, now passing, first sought

to ignore, that oldest weapon of reaction, and then viciously attacked all the evidence of the new Psychic Science, which, it is literally true to say, is now infiltrating even the most strongly entrenched fortresses of physics, of psychology, and of mathematics.

As will be seen by any open-minded investigator, this is proved fully by the works of some of the names we have mentioned in these pages. Already, to be the scientist of pure materialism is to be old-fashioned. Before a generation or two have run, I believe that the Instinct to Matter, which is the "Instinct to Death" of the older-fashioned scientists, will be regarded with amusement blended with amazement, if only because it is so very unscientific.

The mental telescope will be replaced by the mental microscope as man turns in after from his turning out. He will find in the investigation of a little Universe which he has been ignoring, everything and more that he can see or postulate in the Material Universe, itself but a Shadow of the Substance. That "little Universe" is *himself*.

Within the psychic envelope of his own mind he will discover that it is not by turning outwards to Time and Space that man is to discover the secret of life of which Time and Space are the masks, but within his own heart. In *Thought*, he will find such worlds within worlds, and, if you like, Universes within Universes, as will leave his present investigations, physical and astronomical, as the comparative illusions they are.

Some of the greatest thinkers of our world are to-day gradually becoming percipient of a strange phenomenon which they are now investigating. This phenomenon, whether it come from the human mind, as some of them still think, or whether they are, so to speak, extra-terrestrial coming from worlds invisible and still

uncharted, is of the utmost moment and an impulse to the Science of our day in its new turning inward instead of outward.

This phenomenon is neither more nor less than an entirely new concept of Time and Space. Indeed it is the surrender of our time-limited, space-limited consciousness to one of spacelessness and timelessness, which these strange messengers give to us as “The Eternal Now”, in which they insist we all of us live and move and have our being through the eternities.

Whether such communications come out of some subconscious twilights of the human being or are sent from other spheres *through* “sensitives” who themselves in their conscious lives are incapable of even a fraction of such concepts, is here beside the point. For their fuller consideration and understanding, a whole book would be necessary. It is enough for the writer to state positively that such new concepts of space and time and matter are coming through to the scientific consciousness, although it is only as yet dimly aware of them.

But these ideas will, like our modern mathematics, need a new terminology and perhaps a new breed of men and women capable of grasping not only their objective but also their spiritual meaning.

I am one of those who believe that some day it may be discovered that all this earthly life of ours is but a heart-beat in that “Eternal Now” of which I have written, and that even it is possible that while “still in the body pent” we function upon other planes of consciousness in those twilight states which we call sleep and “day-dreaming”.

For that statement, which must here remain just a “statement” for investigation, because it goes outside the scope of this little book, and in itself would need a

volume in support and exposition, I have more than mere conjecture as have many others. But this thing I may say—let no man or woman reading these words who have felt their lives wasted because they have failed to gain the objective accomplishment which the world often miscalls “success”, any longer feel their lives sad and unfulfilled. There is no more question than that the sun rises and sets that *nothing is wasted*—not a thought, not an action. Any man or woman who has had even the *desire* to do something for others, who has given a thought to a poor child or a cup of cold water to one of the little ones, has *accomplished* something. For vibrations are set in motion even by the thought, especially when that thought is crowned by action, which as our science tells us in the sphere of physics will continue for ever and ever.

XXIV

"THE WORLD THAT IS COMING"

(POLITICS AND ECONOMICS)

The blinded Seer pierces the womb of time,
Seeking the whimsy shapes that ghostly run,
Groping the pattern of the stranded line,
Glimpsing the shadows of the Things to Come.

IN the idea in these pages of a "Human God" to replace the older concepts, I have really been surveying God as we feel Him through His workings upon what I have contended throughout to be a "World in Flux".

In this "World in Flux", in an age which will one day be known as "The Age of Enlightenment", and in which the Idea of God itself is in rapid flux, we are advancing rapidly towards such concepts of Time and Space and God as the mind of man has never heretofore conceived. These advances are not being made so much in the laboratory as in a human mind which is becoming four-dimensional.

Our advances in mechanical invention, which has given us the power of gods which we use like apes, are but faint shadows of our advance in our concept of God—in that concept which has transformed God the Judge into God the Friend.

We have just seen how the cataclysmic advances in the Science of our day, instead of "abolishing God", as an older fashioned Science once foolishly boasted, has revealed to mankind a God moving majestic and *real* in the splendour of a Natural Law that is universal.

"Something or Other has released Something or

Other” in this mid-twentieth century, which will completely metamorphose our ideas not only of life but of death, which itself we are beginning to find is but new life. For those that have eyes to see and ears to hear, this metamorphosis has already commenced, masked though it be in wars and rumours of wars and with such an access of reaction, often violent, as has not been seen since the Dark Ages. One has only to epitomise the facts, as set out in these pages of the New Idea of God, and from those facts and the shadows on the wall which they cast to make as far as we can intelligent and intuitive forecast of our world that is coming.

First of all, in the physical world in the sphere of Politico-Economics—for in our day Economics and Politics are one—we have seen the advent of the Automatic Power-Machine. This, as I have shown, has already brought about the honeycombing of the Competitive System in its older form of Rent, Profit and Interest. The power-machine has accomplished this by reducing the purchasing power in the abnormal increase of the productive power of the community and the displacement of labour by the Machine, with the resultant unemployment of millions which we see in all countries.

This, in its turn, will assuredly lead to a projection of those vast State Experiments in relief by “doles” and other enormous collectivist schemes, of which we are only at the beginning, and the reason for and the end of which, the statesman and the business man who launch them know least of all! For such men, reared as they are in the school of opportunism, are rarely practical men, if being “practical” means planning for more than the

moment in order to get votes or money! Already the principal means by which we exist, such as the Railways and Transport with the Mines and even in places the Land, are beginning, directly or indirectly, to be taken out of the hands of what used to be called “Private Enterprise” and taken over by the State. Also, we see that all these things are inevitably whittling away the Landowning Classes and, with the progressive Death Duties, breaking up the great estates. The Industrialist killed the Landowner—the Socialist is killing him!

Already, indeed, there is scarcely a country in Europe, capitalist or communist, which does not declare, as does Red Russia, that the State has Supreme powers over both property and person in times of national emergency. This applies even to the factories, in which in some countries the machinery introduced has to conform to certain government requirements for ease of transformation in the event of war to the making of war munitions. This also applies to that Adventure into the Air of our day as regards the commercial aeroplane, which has to be of a type able to be converted at a moment’s notice into a machine of war, and so help further to fulfil the poet’s forecast, of which we saw the advent in 1914, of “aerial navies grappling in the central blue”.

We have even seen the proposal by one of the Trust magnates who helped to steer America through her banking crisis in 1907, that “when a man had made a million dollars, he and his services should be forcibly co-opted for the State and that he should be prevented from making any more money!” (As for the sons of millionaires in that strenuous country, in our day they are as often Communists as not—for in politics as in physics “to every action there is equal and contrary

reaction!”) But Italy has gone even further, by the State control of private profit-making and the limitation of dividends. The supremacy of the individual in the realm of finance will soon be but an echo of what to our descendants will seem in some of its phases to have been a sort of private madhouse.

All this has been deliberately ignored by a Press which imagines that if it can only keep its head and the heads of the public in the sands, all will be as before!—but not imagined by every section of that Press.

The truth is that, whether we like it or not, the once inviolable Principle of Private Property is to-day a dead letter. At any rate, the sacred rights of Property are yielding virtually to the “sacred rights of man”. Nor can any statesman, under the relentless pressure of our economic system as I have here outlined it, however much he may dislike it, help himself from passing evergreater instalments of “socialist” legislation. As we have seen, for example, in what was once the most fiercely individualist country on this earth—the United States of America under the administration of Franklin Roosevelt and in the Douglas Scheme of £5 a week for all and the partial substitution for money of “national credit notes” now seriously proposed in the province of Alberta, Canada.

And yet in the face of all this relentless slide into an automatic-mechanical civilisation, in the world of Economics, it is being at last cloudily conceived that “man does not live by bread, not even by ‘profit’, alone”—but, literally, “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”. That is to say, by “Religion”.

Money itself is no longer the all-compelling power it was. Money no longer “talks”! Those who speak for it in our day speak with a confusion of tongues that

makes of our Money Systems another Babel. There are even those who, in face of the reversion to exchange and barter of to-day, regard Money as already passing. If it pass, there will pass the greatest obscurer of the Light of God this earth has known, as all the Greater Teachers have emphasized and as Jesus Himself taught in His parable of the eye of a needle and the rich man. But in the form of “tokens” for the exchange of commodities, it will, I think, be retained.

Despite temporary recrudescences of the Money Power, we can, I believe, not only from intelligent anticipation but from the already accomplished fact, deduce the beginning of the end of that Money Power in a day when it is being proposed that the banks themselves should be taken over by the Government.

Now coming a little closer to International Politics and to the Politicians.

I believe that Europe and even Russia will quickly pass through the Era of Dictatorship, if only because that dictatorship has against it all the accumulated knowledge of the last two thousand years and because no Dictator, however powerful, can ever put the clock back. Not even when, as some of these “Super-men” or “Super-gangsters”, as you care to look at them, have enormously improved the economic condition of their peoples—but at the cost of that personal freedom which spells spiritual degradation. The very boast of some of these men that “we are installed for at least a thousand years” is the whistling of the boy at midnight in the churchyard to keep his courage up. Not one of these hag-ridden, fear-ridden leaders can be sure of his place, his life or his system for a thousand hours!

We shall see in the challenge to these dictators, one in which some of these men will pass at the hand of the

assassin, some very cruel and ugly things done on either side. We shall find revolution come from the inside not the outside in these countries—and as a matter of fact already in Russia we have seen several attempts at the “counter-revolutions” which we shall later have repeated on the Continent of Europe.

Dictators bear charmed lives, because until they have accomplished the work they were appointed to do by the seemingly blind but actually all-seeing Powers Behind Life, as I have indicated in these pages, they are protected men. Once that protection is withdrawn they are doomed men.

So will they be withdrawn from our world to another, where they will once more have the chance of learning perhaps before a return to the School of Earth, if the belief in re-birth be founded upon fact, the oldest lesson of all—that Physical Force solves nothing and that they who live by the sword shall also die by it.

So far as Russia is concerned, we are about I think to see the Great Bolshevik Experiment radically transformed. The Russian dictators, whoever they are or may become, will be compelled, as they are already being compelled, to make truce with the *bourgeoisie* they hate. They will also make two other discoveries—the first, that when you seem to change men’s minds by force and fear you actually change nothing, and that when the time and the hour, and, above all, the Man, arrives, the original minds will break out and sweep away all artificial superimposition. The other, that no human being can live without the Idea of God—that Idea which they hate.

Religion is not coming to Russia—for religion has never left Russia.

For even Moscow, which has, in its later phases,

slowly but surely been compelled to abandon much of its original “functionalism” and hostility to certain human and spiritual elements latent in all men, will one day find to its astonishment that the Russian soul is still unchanged—that it has a genius for religion peculiar to itself—one now ready to take newer, more spiritualising forms, and that no nation and no Experiment, however well rooted economically and ideologically that Experiment may be, can live without the Idea of God.

For the land of drunken gods, Russia, freed for the Idea of God by the very Bolshevism which thought itself “God’s Enemy”, and lifting even now to a new vibration of spirit, will yet pour out upon our world such a flood of love and “religion” that it will seem to those in power that the days of the primitive Christian Church have come again, before it had been seduced by pomp and the lust to political power. And this it will do because, with all its lacks and uglinesses, the Communist Experiment loosed education into Russia and with it the power to read and despite all the index-expurgatoriuses of Moscow, to compare. For the Russian dictatorship, the Writing is already on the Walls of its Congresses.

But before that is accomplished we may see Russia, despite herself, caught up in an Eastern War in which she may be decimated by the little Yellow Man. Nor will her one-eyed Dictators in that country of the blind, realise, for such men knowing nothing of the Spiritual Law, realise nothing, that this war will have sprung from themselves. They will not realise it any more than the brute repression by the Romanoffs which brought about the bloody tragedy of their Cave of Adullam was realised by them for what it brought—the repercussion from centuries of mis-rule. “They

that live by the sword” once more. Man has yet to learn that all objective and physical results in or out of nature, must have a mental origin.

One other thing.

For good or evil, but as I believe for good, the spiritual key of this earth has been delivered into the hands of the Anglo-Saxon races. When that section of the English-speaking peoples we know as America, has passed through her fire, whether it be of war or peace, which fortunately for her was ushered in by the “Great Slump”, and has shed her adolescent Worship of Hypertrophy and with it her passion for the dollar, and the sort of “success” which spells failure, she will find her soul and uncover the very real idealism which lies beneath her Trusts and Big Business like the jewel hid in the head of the toad.

It will be given to the Anglo-Saxon race, using that increasingly nebulous term for the multitudinous races it covers, to “hold the ring” and to replace the hypocrisies and insincerities of the old League of Nations by a new living League, for which the failure of the old has been the necessary spade-work, and for the maturing of which the new “religious” spirit in the national life was vital. And I think we shall also see, not so far away, in the coming time, the beginnings of an Anglo-American Alliance, which as the years run out will attract to it the best of the Continental races including what will then be a renascent Germany which will have purged herself of Jew-baiting and regained the spirit of music and philosophy which once was peculiarly hers.

It may be that we are on the threshold of that Parliament of Man of which the poets have dreamed, whilst about us the race and thought barriers are crashing. It may even be that we are about to see a world

where Service shall be supreme and where instead of hate, love shall reign.

In Nationality, we are about to see, and in various religio-political movements are beginning to see, the coming of the "Idea of Inter-nation" which I have called The White International, based upon the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, to replace the older "Red" and "Black" Internationals of a politics and a religion outgrown. None of which means that countries or nationality or the love of country which is sane patriotism is to pass—only that the intelligent Internationist will find himself first an Internationist and after that a member of his own country. He will, in a word, first be a Citizen of the World as was the Jesus who will now, for the first time, come into His own—that is the heritage of love which He was forced to abandon by death—a death itself due to a magnificent impatience with insincerity.

So much for the world of politics, the "poker-play" of which in the time that is coming will sink into comparative insignificance by the side of Social Reform, until, as it might be expressed, "the devil disappears with the diplomat"!

XXV

"THE WORLD THAT IS COMING"

(*Continued*)

(SEX AND MARRIAGE)

BUT it is in the most elusive domain of all—that of Sex—of Men and Women, that we are about to see, socially and morally, the most far-reaching metamorphoses. We are about to see a great broadening and spiritualising of our former concepts of Sex and Morals.

Woman, who during the Great War so largely replaced the Man in the arts of Peace when he was destroying, and who, as he returned to civil life seemed for a time to have been driven back from the advanced positions which she had reached, is once more advancing. We shall yet see her actively in every department of human life, even those once segregated to the male, but doing her work as Woman, not as imitation Man—her original error, from which she is emerging. We shall see her in the pulpits and we shall see her on the lecture platform. Having learnt her lesson, we shall no more see the "bluestocking", the woman with brains and without charm, but we shall find learning and charm go hand in hand, in a day when Man will no longer fear brains in woman more than aught else! A day when even our professors will discover, as Woman herself did long since, that the woman who has lost her sex has lost all!

The landmarks by which men and women lived in the older worlds of Sex and Morals are fast disappearing. I believe we are going to see in the World of To-morrow

at once a broadening and a tightening up of morals—a paradox not so difficult to understand after explanation.

The Great War had done what war always does, loosened and degraded. The license which made entry into our world during and after that war, will, with the Return of Romance which, as I have said early in these pages, we are already witnessing amongst an increasing minority of younger men and women, yield to a chastity and ideal of sex-life higher than anything that has preceded it—and one more “understanding”. Also we are about to see Comradeship enter Love. Hitherto men and women have been lovers—almost anything rather than “comrades”.

But the discovery of the last decade or two in the shadowy and still uncharted realm of Sex, is that we still know little about its spiritual implications, and not too much about its physical. I think it is being at last recognised that “Sex” on its spiritual side is the deeper driving force of our earth, and that its antennæ extend both into ante-natal and post-natal life.

I believe that the next half century will bring that recognition still further to fruition. First of all, that what used to be called “the continuation of the species” is *not* the prime function of the sexes, and that to think of it in this way is to degrade what is a spiritual as much as a physical function, for no domain of human life have man and woman so degraded as that of the relations of the Sexes, which in our day human beings take from “the fashion” of the moment rather than from their convictions. In morals, men and women are incredibly ductile to impression!

With this coming of the new concept of this relation, we shall, I think, see an end to the idea that either Church or Registrar can make a “marriage”, and with it the realisation that all either can do is to “legitimise”

it from the standpoint of the State. That “marriages are made in heaven”, that is in love between two human hearts, and *nowhere else*, will, I think, be the commonplace of the sex-life that is coming.

We are about to see the Return of Romance—not the rather sickly-sentimental romance of the Victorian era, but the Higher Romance which demands not only heart but head, not only feeling but brain. Already, in that age of license out of which we are now passing, it has been realised that nothing takes the fine flavour of Romance from life or kills love like the lust which is its antithesis.

In that day, divorce will be by mutual declaration as it already is in some of the more advanced countries, and the holding together in a living death of man and woman mutually incompatible will be recognised for what it is—the legitimisation not of love but of hate. But one may be assured that with the Idea of God carried into the relationship of the sexes from which it has in our day been banished, marriage will be raised to a standard hitherto unimagined and with it bring about a public opinion which, rather than the law, will be the best safeguard of the Child and the Home.

Such are the realisations and implications which will, I imagine, “implement” the unions of the future.

"THE WORLD THAT IS COMING"

(Continued)

(SCIENCE AND RELIGION)

THE present transition of Science I have already set out faithfully as it comes to me. One has only to indulge in a little mental projection to forecast the following scientific transformations within the next half century.

The age-long battle of Science and Religion will have been settled and forgotten, with the Scientist becoming ever more reverent and more "religious" once he has shed his shibboleths and with the *rapprochement* to Religion which is already showing itself. To find a physicist or psychologist at the end of the next fifty years a materialist will seem to the educated men and women of that time as strange a survival as will that of our present strangled concepts of Time, Matter and Space. Science's enslavement to Matter will within the century have yielded to the freedom of spirit and a terminology which will speak of all phenomena in terms of *vibration* and *dimension*.

For the Mind of Science will by then have so expanded as to have passed beyond the limitations of Time and Space—and as for Matter, it will be regarded for what it really is—an apparition or "appearance" of the Reality behind.

In that day, we shall not think in terms of worlds or Universes but in terms of that Mind and Spirit which to-day is being increasingly regarded as the only inspiration of all phenomena, physical or psychic.

The barriers between the different sciences, which already have begun to dissolve, will, I imagine, within fifty years have more or less disappeared, for it will be found that only an older-fashioned scientific mind will, in that day, be able to make artificial separation of the physical from the mental, which actually we are beginning to think is the source of all substance and of all the phenomena we experience—that is to say of matter as we know it.

The scientist will, I think, in that day realise that behind all his experiments stands the Great Experimenter—God Himself, and to Him he will prayerfully but boldly pay his tribute, knowing that from Him, whether he be regarded as a Person or a Principle, he draws all his inspirational sustenance.

The scientific laboratory of the future will be one in which, however laughable it may seem to a science still material and “mechanistic”, investigations will be opened with prayer and in which I believe the Powers Invisible will be invited in one form or other to co-operate. Indeed, there are scientists who already do this! however heretical it may sound to the Torquemadas of science who still seek to shackle thought.

The Science of the future will no longer be used for the development of poison gas and flame-throwers, but only for the arts of peace—and the scientist who would defend, as he has defended such experiments in our day, will be regarded as an enemy of humanity and one who has used his science not to honour but to dishonour.

In that scientific world we shall see the fuller coming of the Artist-Scientist, of whom such men as Bose and Jeans and Maeterlinck are to-day the pioneers. As in the nearly solitary case of a Leonardo da Vinci of four centuries ago, our artists will often be scientists and

vice versa, for in Art, as in Science, in the evolution of the Higher Minds, in which the cheap versatility of the past will become the “universal” mind, we are seeing the break-down of the specialised craft barriers.

In Medicine, for example, the frenetic specialist of our day who has cut out “religion” from diagnosis, and “healing” from both! will yield to the specialist whose knowledge will be based upon an all-round development and the control of Matter by Mind. In that day, psycho-therapeutics and the healing of body by mind will have largely replaced our present objective and objectionable methods of the knife and medicine, which however will, for certain cases, still do their beneficent work. For that will be a time when even the blindest of scientists will have mastered something of the founts of life instead of only those “appearances” which he has mistaken for life itself. One reason why medical science, when, as in physiology, it touches “life” itself, always finds itself in the cul-de-sac of matter, and why surgery, of all departments of Medicine, has made the farthest advance. In a phrase, the medical scientist of the future will be more of a psychologist and less of a carpenter.

Science, like the Religion it has been fighting, is beginning to believe that our earth will soon need an attic as large as heaven in which to scrap nearly everything we have hitherto been taught about our world and the worlds to come. They may, in their enthusiasm for scrapping, even have some difficulty in remembering that no child can run before it can walk and that these scientific and religious adolescences were necessary steps to the fuller realisations of our day!

It is realising that with the coming of *free power* either through the manipulation of the atom or by tapping the electric currents, when no longer will it be necessary for

man to work in the sweat of his brow in a day when the automatic machine will do all his work for him, freeing in him both God and devil, the spirit of religion must enter into his mentality if our civilisation is not to crash in an orgy of lust and materialism.

When we come to forecast the future of the Churches which, in their more dogmatic form are still the secret enemies of the Science the future of which we have been anticipating, we find ourselves upon ground where, indeed, “fools rush in where angels fear to tread”. Yet, giving rein to that imagination which does at times overtake man, and even woman, and which in its prophetic form of “serialism” has been vouched by such authorities as J. W. Dunne and even Jung, I think one may not altogether inaccurately seek to form a mental picture of the future.

I am not of those who believe that our Churches will soon pass and that the Man and Woman of the time that is coming will leave the tabernacles empty and only find their “churches” in their own hearts and minds. Man, if not Woman, is a gregarious animal who likes to take his religion as his pleasures in flocks. Also, I feel that those who think in this way forget that, as I have before pointed out, there are always being born into this world souls of the particular stage of development who need the crutches of church and even dogma to help them to walk upright. This earth is not yet a place of perfection! It is, as I have here indicated in many ways, a School. Nevertheless, with the steady lifting of the quality of the human soul, we shall I think see higher incarnations and with them will begin to see, during the next half century, the passing of the harsher, narrower dogmas, and with it the gradual emptying of our churches through the flight to other tabernacles of their more thinking

members. As education, spiritual and intellectual (not always the same thing!) advances, we shall naturally see the replacement of unsupported creed and dogma by facts properly substantiated by science and *experience*, until at last our churches may reach the point when they will be used for public instruction and lectures as much as for public worship.

With dogma and creed, ceremony will go—but not, it seems to me, that ceremony of symbolism by which alone the Higher Truths can be brought to the ultimate knowledge of men and women, and which tempers the too dazzling light for the eyes of our poor humanity. And that thought I present without misgivings to those who still find in ceremony the chief approach to the Jahweh-gods—the reign of whom are not yet over. For again and again we shall see apparent “revivals” of the gods of dogma, but always will those who support them find, as they have found steadily during the last half century or more, that though the tide may seem to be coming in here and there about “the fastnesses of the faith”, it is actually ever going away from those fastnesses to lave other shores.

The cruder doctrines of “Blood and Fire”, which are the fierce antitheses of ritual, will, like its adherents, see the finish of the exodus that began in the last generation. Like many of the Churches of the older breed, they will be “an unconscionable time in dying”, but die they will, for they have everything against them—science, education and, above all . . . religion—that Religion of Love which is the antithesis of their hells and vengeance. Even the “Liberal” Churches of non-conformity, of which I have elsewhere written, are beginning to “feel the draught” not only of “science” but of the psychic investigation which is already engaging many of their members.

In all this, what I feel we shall see is the bringing of Religion into Life so that Life itself will become so impregnated with it that it will cease to be differentiate. So Jesus Himself lived—He whose very act was religion.

But of all the religious developments of the next hundred years, I believe the most formidable for the historians of the future will have been the coming of a new World Religion without dogma and without fear, which will restore the direct spiritual communication of the earlier churches before men had lost their faith in angels. Some of us believe that the barriers between the Two Worlds, that is of the Visible and Invisible, are wearing thin, and that already we can hear the knockings on the Other Side of the wall.

However that may be, I feel assured that just as in Science we are about to witness the concentration of the Scientific Mind upon the most important thing in the world—the problem of whether we survive death?—so also we are about to find the same phenomenon in the twin domain of Religion.

Survival of Death with all its connotations and implications will, I believe, absorb the religious mind of Man in the centuries ahead of us. This is not the place to enter into the possible channels or even the results of that investigation, upon the idea behind which, as any one can see by reading the New Testament, the Early Church was so largely founded. It is enough to say that it may yet be that Men and Angels will commune together, and that this little transitory world of the Visible may one day be able to call upon the knowledge, intellectual and other, of the Spiritual World.

Finally, I have little doubt, for of it we can already see the first signs, that the artist-philosopher of whom I have written will gradually take the place of the

priest and the “pure scientist” as leader of thought, spiritual or intellectual. There will no longer be for him that vicious “specialisation” and segregation of our day which in the scientist has destroyed perspective and in the Church has cut it off from the common life and made it what it is—something remote and the priest first a “priest” and then a “human being”.

The artist-philosopher will be understood for the “sensitive” between the Two Worlds that he or she is, for the day of the Woman artist and Woman religious leader (“priestess” if you like) is coming. His the power to convey and to create and to express, as did his great prototype, the artist-philosopher—Jesus, who, in His day, was also “a little lantern set within a naughty world”.

Never before have Man and Woman been so vitally concerned with God and Religion, as in this time of “The Great Flux”, when there has broken through to the human heart this feeling of the *nearness* and *reality* of God—of His humanity as well as His divinity in a world led by angels.

EPILOGUE

I ride my horse where none may follow,
I couch my lance, now near, now far,
List to my hoofs, reverberate, hollow,
Beating their way from star to star.

I couch my lance at ghostly windmills,
'Gainst ghosts I lay my frenzied steel,
Clear the course and leap the chasm,
Pass the shadow—to find it *real*!

The Free Lance.

I HAVE endeavoured in the foregoing pages to set down in manner “understandable of the people” my concept of “a human God”. Whether I have succeeded or not, I do believe, with all my heart and soul, that this God-concept will be found by anyone who cares to take the trouble about the only thing really worth troubling about, the Idea of God, to be endorsed by experience. It can be “tested”.

This Idea of a God, at once human and divine, at once separate from and yet part of ourselves, enormously and patiently concerned for the individual as for the whole, is, at any rate, the “Idea” which all the Great Teachers, in one way or another, and in whose footsteps we humbly follow, have set out as “God”.

To this, so far as I know, there has been no exception, and, in the future, there is likely to be no exception. God is All—and All is God, now and for evermore.

It may be well, one thinks, to set down one's own conclusions more in detail and as they have come to

one personally in arriving at this view of God the Friend, in a series of affirmations of what “I believe”. These tentative conclusions are entirely personal, are not intended in any sense to be a guide or an invocation to any other human being, and, like all things human, are but the immediate expression of my view of a God who is manifold in expression as in metamorphosis. But, once more, I think they will, at least in “spirit”, be found generally, to be identically the same conclusions behind the religions of the Great Teachers of humanity who at intervals throughout the ages have come to show his God to Man and *who all really taught the same religion*:

I believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man as the basis of “my religion”.

I believe that woman’s and man’s survival of “death”, which is itself the world’s greatest illusion, is now proved not only by “faith”, but by scientific demonstration as closely reasoned as that of any of the other accepted facts of science.

I believe by faith—for it is unprovable by intellectual demonstration—that Man is immortal; that he passes from world to world and from vibration to vibration for ever and ever, always drawing nearer to the perfection that is God, his Friend.

So much for the fundamentals of my religion. Now for those fundaments of being expressed simply, but in more detail.

The Spirit of God in our day is fluttering about new tabernacles and over new altars. It is leaving the channels of Orthodoxy and dogma and “finding a

resting-place for the soles of its feet" within that vast, inchoate, still unformed stream of human thought and effort which is yielding the God of Dogma for a friendly God and a Religion no longer separated from but which is life.

I regard this new concept of a "human" God, definitely as in itself a religion, but one which finds its supporters both within and without all churches and all faiths from Christianity to Buddhism and Moham-medanism. That it will ultimately have its own forms and its own temples, I am sure, out of which, if these become institutionalised and the spirit of this human God be lost, the enlightened ones must always be ready to walk with "the eternal minority" from which all evolution springs.

I feel also assured that, as we can already see, it will find within those temples of what is the New-Old Faith of survival of death and oneness with God, room and channels for the expression of all types of view—religious, political and economic.

Indeed, this "Idea of God" is already beginning to sort itself out into various grades of spiritual and intellectual development and outlook. No two of us are on the same rung of the ladder of evolution.

I believe that we have all of us lived before, sometimes in the flesh, sometimes in spirit; that each of these lives is an experience or school, and that this earth is intended to be an elementary school, in which the chief lessons to be learned are, first, the meaning of Sin and Pain and their employment as evolutionary spurs; then the conquering of Fear; and, finally, perhaps, release from *Matter* and from *Form*.

I believe that when we as individuals have learned our lesson, we pass on to the higher classes in the spirit world which lies next to this on the other side of what

we miscall “Death”, and that, when all our earth has learnt its lesson, its *raison d’être* having passed, the earth itself will also pass as did Atlantis. This, although I have no definite evidence for it, I think is the fate of all the planets, both of our system and the other countless systems, many of them inhabited, though by other forms of life than ours.

Although I feel that what is known as reincarnation is fairly proved, and that, if I am correctly informed, it was taught by Jesus Himself and by the Early Christian Church, I neither insist that it is in any way, so to speak, “necessary to salvation”, nor do I feel that a *prima facie* case cannot be made out against it.

In this, as in all my beliefs, I am absolutely non-dogmatic; knowing that this earth is possibly one of the lowest developed in the solar system, and realising how ignorant are even the best informed of us all.

For humility is the Open Sesame to all knowledge, and the fullest freedom for discussion and criticism of every side of religion must at all times be encouraged, each one having some facet of truth which no one else possesses. We learn and change as we advance.

I feel assured from my own experience that our Father-Mother God is by our side from birth to death and beyond; that He is with us when we are loving and hating; playing and suffering; lying down and standing up. I believe that He uses two methods of communication—one, the *direct*, when He speaks to us through inspiration and faith; the other the *indirect*, when He speaks to us through His angels or guides. I call Him “Father-Mother God” because I feel the woman-quality is as much part of Him as the male and that this quality is now being gradually realised.

Each one of us has such a guide attached to her or him so long as we live down here, and it is our guide who usually receives us into the next world after we pass through death's little friendly portal. Although our "good angel" is always with us, we only realise it when we reach a certain stage of consciousness and development.

In that moment "we open the door and find the guide waiting".

I believe that we have possibly sometimes more than one guide at the same time, and that, as we advance on the path, we change our guides either for higher guides or in order to get a more varied experience, but we still hold the friendship of all of "The White Company". Such guidance is, I imagine, given to us through all eternity.

Man consists of body, spirit and soul. The body is the temple of the spirit or "ghost" which, it has been demonstrated, usually leaves it within three to five days of the passing from a lower vibration to a higher, which we call "death". The "soul", a word often misused for "spirit", is the immortal principle of the human being which unites him for ever with the God of whom he is a part. We are all, so to speak, "gods in the making".

Jesus of Nazareth is for me the last and greatest of the long chain of spiritual teachers sent by our Friend God to show us "the path" to Him. He was immediately preceded by the Gautama Buddha, and He will be followed by others, as I think. He, the Great Lover, only hated two things—dogma and insincerity. The former because it sought to confine beneath the strait-jacket of the theologian and to confuse His simple message of Love—which was, indeed, His *only* message. The latter because, as I think, He realised that the pride

of intellect which from insincerity springs, like the pride of power, of which it is the essence, as nothing else cut Man off from his Father God, and "caused the little ones to offend".

I believe that Jesus, like perhaps others of the Greater Ones, having accomplished his initiation of earth, instead of passing on as He might have done to the higher spheres of spirit, deliberately, because of His love and self-sacrifice and *wish to serve*, once more took flesh upon Himself through an earthly father and mother, and, fully knowing His coming fate upon the Cross, re-entered this darkened earth of ours to help us forward upon the road.

Nor was it, I imagine, the actual crucifixion of Jesus which was so dreadful, in a day when many others were crucified, but His terrible *consciousness* of and love for those whom He knew would betray Him and His crushing knowledge of the long and weary path of evolution Man and Woman together had to tread on their path to the stars.

That is why any man who follows Jesus must be prepared to-day to lose all those who are nearest and dearest to him . . . *for the time*, though as Man advances and Pain and Sorrow are no longer necessary to scourge him forward and upwards, this will not always be so. All faithful ones must ever be ready, when necessary, *to stand alone*, with Jesus only as their friend.

One thing I believe, partly on faith and partly upon what others seem now persistently in one way or other to be told. I believe that Jesus, who never really lost touch with the earth-people He loved, to-day once more, if you like to put it that way, "walks the earth".

With that belief, goes another, and founded upon

more than conjecture—that before many centuries have run out into the sands of time, perhaps two or three, another great teacher will come to comfort us, this teacher already having his way prepared by other lesser teachers, so forming one more link in The Great Cosmic Chain, behind it, the Cosmic Christ.

With this I believe that in what the East calls, and often misinterprets—*karma*, we reap what we sow; no more, no less, as Jesus Himself taught. But *karma* is not *fate*, as the East has fatally thought. Nothing is “fated”. Karma or “fate” can be turned by prayer, the most powerful of all media, which so creates a new and good karma.

“Ask and ye shall receive”, said Jesus. It is the truth. There is *always* some answer to prayer which is made even with a mustard-seed of faith, as anyone who reads these lines can prove. This universe, as all the great teachers have taught, is based upon *Free Will*. Nothing is “determined”. Man is master of his soul and his destiny.

God Himself as a personal Friend does not only speak to us in a series of “relays”. He answers prayer direct without intermediary. He is *Himself* always with us. He loves us to love and to play and to laugh and to work. He is not an ascetic, any more than was His greatest Son.

Exaggerated ascetism, in thought or act, like exaggerated pursuit of pleasure, warps and destroys. He is not only a God that is divine, but a God that is “human”.

When we have learned to accept pain and sin as “experiences”, they will no longer be necessary for our evolution. Even on this earth the individual can pass into a sort of enchanted harbour where joy and quiet

content replace sin and suffering. We have, literally, nothing to fear, the only hells being those which we create for ourselves, and heaven itself lying within us.

Finally I believe that *God is love*.

FINIS

SOME REVIEWS
of
SHAW DESMOND'S BOOKS

Novels

PASSION. "A remarkable novel. . . . The book is a vivid and startling piece of impressionism."—*The Times*, London.

GODS. "Desmond's picture of Ireland is the most complete that has ever been drawn in fiction."—*New York Herald*.

DEMOCRACY. "The best political novel since *The New Machiavelli*."—*Daily Express*, London.

THE ISLE OF GHOSTS. "Powerful, though chaotic, this new imaginative novel certainly is. . . . The fine, tragic figure of Jasper Moriarty, intensely human and frustrate, reveals Mr. Desmond's inner strength of conception."—*The Times*, London.

ECHO. "The atmosphere of the reign of Nero is excellently conveyed, and the fights are thrilling."—*Saturday Review*.

THE STORY OF A LIGHT LADY. "His new novel is undeniably impressive. . . . I was unable to leave the book until I had finished it."—*The Spectator*.

Fairy Tales

TALES OF THE LITTLE SISTERS OF SAINT FRANCIS. "Shaw Desmond's strange and fascinating stories."—*New Statesman*.

Other Books

THE DRAMA OF SINN FEIN. "He is the Thomas Carlyle of the Irish struggle . . . chapters of his notable book are comparable in fire and force with *The French Revolution*."—*The Bookman*, London.

WE DO NOT DIE. "(We) admire his power of surveying . . . the whole field of his subject, past, present and future."—*The Scotsman*.

"It would be impossible in a review to cover . . . this admirable volume, since it leaves nothing out of value to psychic science. . . . Keen intelligence; impeccable honesty; and . . . a sense of humour."—*Light*.

"Great labour and research have been given to this work . . . contains a vast amount of thought."—*Psychic News*.

WINDJAMMER: THE BOOK OF THE HORN. "This amazing log of Shaw Desmond's voyage round the Horn."—*The Tatler*.

"A faithful account of life and men in one of the last of the sailing ships . . . he took his share of the work, danger, and fun. I cannot remember a sea book so well illustrated."—*The Blue Peter*.

AFRICAN LOG. "Covers an astonishingly wide range. . . . In dealing with the problem of the natives Mr. Desmond is thoroughly in his element."—From a column review in *The Times Literary Supplement*.

"The raw material of a notable book. . . . His candour and independence."—*Manchester Guardian*.

"Vivid and engrossing volume."—*Truth*.

